

The Message of Islam

www.sirat-e-mustaqeem.com

by:

Dr. Abdurrahman al-Sheha

Translated by:

M. M. Abdus-Salam

Edited by:

Abu Ayoub Jerome Boulter

Abdurrahmaan Murad

Revised Edition

Table of Content

1. Introduction
2. Monotheism in Islam
3. The Principal Goals of Islam
4. Distinguishing Qualities of Islam
5. The Spiritual Aspect of Islam
6. Belief in Allah
7. Belief in the Angels
8. The Merits of belief in the Angels
9. Belief in Allah's Books
10. The Merits of belief in Allah's Books
11. Belief in the Messengers
12. Who is Muhammad (ﷺ)?
13. The Merits of belief in the Messengers
14. Belief in the Last Day
15. The Merits of belief in the Last Day
16. Belief in *Qadaa & Qadar*
17. The Merits of belief in *Qadaa & Qadar*
18. The Pillars of Islam
 - 1st Pillar of Islam: The Two Testimonies of Faith
 - The Meaning of *Laa ilaaha il'laa Allah*
 - The Conditions of the *Shahadah*
 - The Meaning of the second Testimony
 - 2nd Pillar of Islam: *Salaah*

3rd Pillar of Islam: *Zakaah*

4th Pillar of Islam: Fasting

5th Pillar of Islam: Hajj

19. The Political Aspect of Islam
20. The Economic Aspect of Islam
21. The Social Aspect of Islam
22. Rights owed to the Ruler
23. Rights owed to the ruled
24. Rights owed to the Parents
25. Rights owed to the husband
26. A husband's obligations towards his wife
27. The rights of relatives
28. The rights of children
29. The rights of neighbor
30. The rights of friends and companions
31. The rights of guests
32. Rights related to employment
33. The rights of the employed
34. The rights of the employer
35. General rights and obligations
36. The Moral Aspect of Islam
37. Prohibition regarding food, drink & clothing
38. The Commandments of Islam
39. A Glimpse of some Islamic Etiquettes
40. Dining Etiquettes

41. Manners of relieving Oneself
42. Manners of seeking permission
43. Manners of greeting
44. Manners that relate to the sitting place
45. Manners of gathering
46. Manners of conversation
47. Manners of joking
48. Etiquettes of visiting the Ill
49. The Etiquettes of sleeping
50. Manner of approaching one's spouse
51. Etiquettes of traveling
52. The manners of dealing with public property
53. Manners of Trade
54. Conclusion
55. Glossary



I begin with the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and may Allah exalt the mention of His Prophet, and keep him and his household safe and secure from all evil.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Say O People of the Book¹! Come to a word that is just between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others as objects of worship besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.» [3:64]

Islam is the religion which agrees with the natural disposition of man. It urges Muslims and calls them to ask about things that are incomprehensible to them, through the consultation of competent and knowledgeable authorities. In Islam there are no obscure or mysterious things; it allows us to ask about everything. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«So ask the people of the knowledge if you know not.» [16:43]

By nature, humans have many questions in their minds that require logical and clear answers, and the Qur'an provides such answers. Some of these basic queries are as follows:

a. What is the origin of humanity? The answer to this can be found in the words of Allah:

¹ i.e Jews and Christians.

﴿And indeed We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay. Thereafter We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest firmly fixed. Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (fetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators.﴾ [23:12-14]

b. What is the status of rank of humans in the universe? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And indeed We have honored the children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea and have provided them with good and pure things, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference.﴾ [17:70]

c. Why did Allah create humans? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And I (God) have only created the *Jinn*⁴ and humanity that they may worship Me (alone). No sustenance do I require of them nor do I require that they should feed Me. Indeed Allah is the only Giver of (all) sustenance, Lord of Power, the Most Strong.﴾ [51:56-8]

He (ﷻ) also says:

﴿Did you then think that We had created you in jest and that you would not be brought back to us (for account)? So Exalted is Allah, the True King: There is none who is worshipped in truth but He, the Lord of the Throne of Honor!﴾ [23:115-6]

d. Who is the Creator? He is the only One worthy of being worshipped...Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿He is Allah, other than whom there is no God, Knower of the unseen and seen. He is the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent. He is Allah, other than whom there is no God, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the

Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, and the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him. He is Allah the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.﴾
[59:22-24]

e. What should our behavior be towards those things Allah created in this universe? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed Him you worship.﴾ [2:172]

f. What is the true religion, which one should embrace, and what is the path that leads to happiness in the Hereafter? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.﴾ [3:85]

g. What is the path which leads to peace of mind and heart and mental stability? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those who believed and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Indeed in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.﴾ [13:28]

h. How about those who do not believe in Allah and His revelations?

﴿But whosoever turns away from My reminder (i.e. My Message), verily for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.﴾
[20:124]

i. What is our final end in this life...Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Every soul shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full.

Whosoever is removed from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, they are indeed successful. The life of this world is nothing but a comfort of illusion.﴾ [3:185]

j. Is it possible that we be recreated? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And [now] he [argues about Us, and] thinks of Us in terms of comparison, and is oblivious of how he himself was created! [And so] he says, “Who could give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?” Say: “He who brought them into being in the first instance will give them life [once again], for He is All-Knower of every creation.﴾ [36:78-79]

He (ﷻ) also says:

﴿O humankind! If you are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then Lo! We have created you from dust, then from a drop of seed, then from a clot, then from a little lump of flesh, some formed and some unformed (miscarriage), that We may make (it) clear for you. And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time, and afterward We bring you forth as infants.﴾ [22:5]

k. What happens after death? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Lo! Those who disbelieve among the People of the Scripture and the idolaters will abide in the Fire of Hell. They are the worst of created beings. And Lo! Those who believe and do good works are the best of created beings. Their reward is with their Lord; Gardens of Eden underneath which rivers flow, wherein they dwell forever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. This is (in store) for him who fears his Lord.﴾ [98:6-8]

Dear reader I reaffirm to you that Islam has all the solutions to problems that face the world today. The world has implemented many doctrines to solve some of its greatest problems, but over

and over, these doctrines prove unsuitable and incapable of resolving them... so why do people at large not implement the laws of Islam in their life to seek the betterment of human life?

C.E. Abdullah Archibald W. Hamilton said:

I feel that I must write and express my heartfelt thanks to all my Muslim brothers who, on my embracing Islam, have so kindly written or sent telegrams to me. I appreciate their good wishes more than my words can convey. After the last war, when the world waded through streams of blood, I thought that all peace and goodwill was at an end but the fact that my brethren across the seven seas are so willing to extend a hand of friendship brings a message of hope and good cheer to me. This has proved to me more than anything else, that Islam alone can bring peace to this world.

Dear reader, some Muslims today are lost and do not implement the teachings of Islam in their lives; they are only Muslims by name. A true Muslim implements the commandments of the *Qur'an and Sunnah* in his daily life. A true Muslim is not he who chooses from Islam what suits him and then leaves all else aside!

It is not appropriate that Islam be associated with certain countries or races. Furthermore, it is not appropriate to say that all Muslims live their lives in conformity with the Islamic Legal law. In fact, many Muslims are lost and do not apply the true teachings of Islam. Islam is not as some think - mere religious rites that are practiced at set times - rather, it comprises belief, law, devotions, transactions and dealings. It is a religion as well as a governmental system. It has been said:

‘What a great religion, if only there were men who would put its teachings into practice, adhere to its commandments and abstain from its prohibitions.’

In his book *‘What is Islam?’* *W. Montgomery Watt* said:

Prejudice is only one of the difficulties to be met by the European or American student of Islam. As soon as he

begins to describe Islam as ‘the religion of the Qur’an’ or the ‘religion of the four hundred million Muslims of today’, he introduces a category which does not fit the category of ‘religion’. For what does ‘religion’ now mean to the occidental? At best, for the ordinary man, it means a way of spending an hour or so on Sundays in practices which give him some support and strength in dealing with the problems of daily life, and which encourages him to be friendly towards other persons and to maintain the standards of sexual propriety; it has little or nothing to do with commerce or economics or politics or industrial relationships. At worst it fosters an attitude of complacency in the more prosperous individuals and breeds smugness. The European may even look on religion as an opiate developed by exploiters of the common people in order to keep them in subjection. How different from the connotations to the Muslim of the verse: ‘The true religion with God is Islam’! The word translated as ‘religion’ is *Deen*, which in Arabic commonly refers to a whole way of life. It is not a private matter for individuals, touching only the periphery of their lives, but something which is both private and public, something which permeates the whole – theological dogma, forms of worship, political theory, and a detailed code of conduct, including even matters which the European would classify as hygiene or etiquette.

Islam, in its entirety, was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and is unchanged; the Muslims on the other hand, have changed. If a Muslim makes a mistake, it does not mean that Islam concurs with his action. To make this clearer: if a person has a comprehensive guide to build a dismantled vehicle, and he fails to follow the manual and thus assembles it incorrectly... does this mean that the manual is incorrect?

I ask the reader of this booklet to read it without preconceived notions about Islam, and that his goal should be to reach the

truth, not to search for faults. Furthermore, do not be misled by your emotions. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And when it is said unto them: follow that which Allah has revealed, they say: ‘We follow that wherein we found our fathers’. What! Even though their fathers did not understand anything nor did they have guidance?﴾
[2:170]

The reason for this is that a logical man would not accept anything unless he has researched and scrutinized it, and he would only disseminate it amongst people and rectify their errors once they have attested to its veracity.

Finally, I must admit that I have not covered every aspect about Islam in this booklet due to its vastness. Islam governs man’s life in this world in every aspect, and one would need to write several books in order to discuss all its aspects. In this booklet, I have highlighted some focal points concerning the basic morals of Islam. I mention each point, and then support it with proof from the *Qur’an and Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Some may say, with the aim of implying that Islamic Law was adopted from present day law systems, that some of the Islamic laws can be found and seen implemented in modern society. This dubious point can be easily put to rest when we know that Islamic Law is over fourteen hundred years old. If anything, the laws implemented by these societies may be said to have been derived from Islamic Laws. Furthermore, many Orientalists have studied Islamic Law for various nefarious reasons and objectives which seek not to clarify and explain it, but to downplay the true source by pointing at possible worldly sources.

Dr.Abdurrahmaan b. Abdul-Kareem al-Sheha

P.O. Box 59565 - Riyadh, K.S.A 11535

Email: alsheha2@gmail.com

<http://www.islamland.org>

Monotheism in Islam

Islam, like other divine religions, advocates several precepts and beliefs which Allah has required its followers to believe and propagate, but coercion is not a valid means to achieve this end. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right (Path of) Guidance has become distinct from the wrong path.» [2:256]

Islam commands its adherents to propagate the religion in a good and fair manner. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better.» [16:125]

It is a fundamental principle that a person must be convinced before declaring their acceptance of Islam; for if they do so out of compulsion, their speech and outer actions will be incongruent with their belief, and this is defined as hypocrisy in Islam. Islam has warned sternly against hypocrisy and regards it as a sin greater than mere disbelief. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Indeed the hypocrites are in the lowest depth of the Fire.» [4:145]

This is the role of the Prophets: to convey the message to humans and to guide them to righteousness without compulsion or force. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And obey Allah and obey the Messenger (O Muhammad (ﷺ)). And if you turn away, then (know) Our Messengers have only been sent to clearly convey [the message].» [64:12]

The Principal Goals of Islam

The Prophet (ﷺ) said in *Mina*² in his Farewell Pilgrimage³:

“Do you know which day this is?” They (i.e. his companions) replied, **“Allah and His Messenger know best.”** He said, **“Indeed this is a sacred Day** (the Day of ‘*Arafah* in Hajj). **Do you know which place this is?”** They (his companions) replied, **“Allah and His Messenger know best.”** He said, **“A sacred place** (Mecca and its surroundings). **Do you know which month this is?”** They (his companions) replied, **“Allah and His Messenger know best.”** He said, **“A sacred month** (the month of *Dhul-Hijjah*, the 12th month of the Islamic Calendar). **Indeed, Allah has made your lives, your wealth, and your honor inviolable and sacred, like the sanctity of this [sacred] day, in this [sacred] month, in this [sacred] place.”** [*al-Bukhari*]

The most important goals which Islam calls to and utterly preserves are the preservation of religion, life, honor, wealth, mind, offspring, as well as the preservation of the rights of the weak and disabled. In regards to the inviolability of life, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**And do not kill anyone who Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause.**﴾ [17:33]

In regards to the inviolability of wealth, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**Eat not up your property among yourselves unjustly.**﴾
[2:188]

In reference to the sanctity of honor, Allah (ﷻ) says:

² **Mina**: a valley within the sacred precincts of Makkah.

³ The last and only Pilgrimage, or Hajj, of the Prophet (ﷺ).

﴿And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a lewd evil sin, and an evil way.﴾ [17:32]

He (ﷺ) also says:

﴿Who so commits a delinquency or sin, then throws (the blame) thereof upon someone innocent, has burdened himself with falsehood and a flagrant sin.﴾ [4:112]

In regards to the prohibition of transgression against lineage and ancestry, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And when he turns away (from you) his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the cultivation and lineage; and Allah loves not mischief and corruption.﴾ [2:205]

Islam takes great care to protect the rights of the weak, for they are more likely to be oppressed than others. For this reason, Allah mentions in the Qur'an several categories of the weak and some ways in which they may be wronged. With regards to parents, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them 'uff' (a word of disrespect), nor shout at them but address them with terms of honor.﴾ [17:23]

In regards to orphans, Allah says:

﴿Therefore, the orphan oppress not.﴾ [93:9]

Islam enjoins that their wealth be protected and preserved. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Come not near the wealth of the orphan except with that which is better (to improve and protect it).﴾ [17:34]

In regards to children, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And that you slay not your children because of poverty, We provide for you and for them.﴾ [6:151]

In regards to the sick, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Free the prisoner, feed the hungry, and visit the sick.”
[*al-Bukhari*]

In regards to the elderly, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“He is not from my followers: he who does not respect his elders, nor shows mercy to the young, nor respects the scholars.” [*at-Tirmidhi*]

In regards to the needy, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And repulse not those who ask.﴾ [93:10]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever helps his brother in his time of need, Allah will be there in his time of need.” [*Muslim*]

There are many other excellent manners which the religion of Islam commands Muslims to adopt, all which refines the individual's character and helps to reform society as a whole.

Distinguishing Qualities of Islam

[1] There are explicit texts in the Qur'an as well as the *Hadeeths*⁴ of the Prophet (ﷺ) which indicate that all religions called to the same basic principle, to worship Allah alone in exclusion to all others. Allah sent prophets to mankind, and each one's message abrogated the one prior to it, from the apostleship of Noah (عليه السلام) until the commissioning of Muhammad (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed I am to the other prophets as is a man who built a house beautifully and perfectly, except one brick which was not placed in its corner. People circle and admire it, but say, ‘If only a brick was put in this place!’ I am that brick, and I am the last of all prophets.” [al-Bukhari]

No prophet or messenger of Allah will appear after Muhammad (ﷺ). The only exception to this is Jesus (عليه السلام). When the Final Hour draws near, he will descend⁵ to the earth and fill it with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and tyranny. He will not convey a new religion, but rather he will rule with Islam. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The Hour will not be established until the son of Mary (Jesus) descends as a just ruler judging with the religion of Islam. He will break the cross and kill the pig. He will abolish the *jizyah*⁶ and there will be a surplus of wealth until no one will accept it.” [al-Bukhari]

All Messengers called to the oneness of Allah (ﷻ) and disproved association of any partners to Him in His dominion or

⁴ Hadeeth: The narration of the speech, actions, characteristics, or tacit approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ).

⁵ The reason for this is that Jesus did not die, as the Christians and the Jews believe; rather, he was raised up to the heavens and the Jews thought they killed him. See Qur'an (4:157).

⁶ The *jizyah* is a tax paid by non-Muslims who choose to reside in a Muslim land in exchange for protection.

worship. They also proclaimed Allah as being far removed from every imperfection. They called their peoples to worship Him alone without any intermediaries. They reformed mankind and guided them to a path through which they would achieve true happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islam) which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have inspired to you (O Muhammad (ﷺ)), and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus, saying you should establish the religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically) and make no divisions in it.» [42:13]

[2] Islam has abrogated all previous religions, and it is the last religion which Allah chose for humanity. Allah will not accept anything else from His slaves. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad (ﷺ)) the Book (this Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scriptures that came before it and a witness over them.» [5:48]

Because it is the last religion, Allah has promised to preserve and guard it from all distortions until the Day of Judgment, contrary to previous religions which were sent at specific times to specific people. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Indeed it is We who have sent down the Reminder (i.e. the Qurán and Sunnah) and indeed it is We who will guard and protect it.» [15:9]

The Messenger of Islam, Muhammad (ﷺ) is the last of all messengers. No messenger will come after him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets.» [33:40]

This does not mean that Islam does not regard or believe in the previous messengers or revelations; rather, Jesus (ﷺ) conveyed to his people the same message Moses (ﷺ) conveyed to his people; and Muhammad (ﷺ) conveyed the same message which

Jesus (ﷺ) conveyed to his people: to worship Allah alone, while associating no partners with Him.

Muhammad (ﷺ) was the last of prophets and messengers. Muslims are commanded to believe in all the messengers and Divine Scriptures. Whoever rejects any of them commits disbelief and is not considered a Muslim. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers, saying, ‘We believe in some but reject others,’ and wish to adopt a way in between. They are in truth disbelievers.» [4:150-151]

[3] The religion of Islam completed and perfected the legislations which came before it. As these religions were meant only for a specific nation and time, they are not suited for the present world and times. Islam, a universal and eternal religion perfected and completed those aspects which were limited to past peoples and times, affirming those aspects suitable for all times and peoples. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.» [5:3]

For this reason it is the best religion. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«You [Muslims] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin all that Islam has ordained and forbid all that Islam has forbidden, and you believe in Allah. And had the People of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] believed, it would have been better for them; among them are some who have faith, but most of them are disobedient and rebellious.» [3:110]

[4] Islam is a global religion that addresses all of humanity. It was not revealed for a specific race or class, but rather one in which all people are regarded as equal. There is no segregation based upon color, language, location, and lineage; rather, it is

based upon specific beliefs which all people share, keeping them united. Whoever believes in Allah as the One and only true Lord, that Islam is the correct religion and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the last messenger, he is regarded as a Muslim, irrespective of race, color or ethnicity. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And We have not sent you (O Muhammad (ﷺ)) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to *all* humanity.»
[34:28]

As for the previous messengers, they were sent to their specific nations. Allah (ﷻ) says about Noah (عليه السلام):

«Indeed, We sent Noah to his people.» [7:59]

About Prophet *Hud*, Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And to (the People of) ‘*Aad* (We sent) their brother Hood. He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him!’» [7:65]

About *Salih*, Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And to (the People of) *Thamud* (We sent) their brother *Salih*. He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other God but Him!’» [7:73]

About *Lot*, Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And (remember) Lot, when he said to his people...»
[7:80]

About *Shu‘aib*, Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And to (the People of) Midian, (We sent) their brother *Shu‘aib*.» [7:85]

About Moses, Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Then after them We sent Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs.» [7:103]

And about Jesus, Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And (remember) when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you confirming the Torah (which came) before me.’» [61:6]

Due to the fact that Islam is a global religion and that it calls mankind at large, Allah commands Muslims to convey its message to the world. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Thus We have made you [Muslims], a just and the best nation, that you be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger (Muhammad (ﷺ)) be a witness over you.» [2:143]

[5] The legislations and teachings of Islam are from Allah; thus they are unchangeable. They are unlike human legislations which contain mistakes, shortcomings and are continuously influenced by exterior factors, of which are surroundings, culture, tradition and society. This is something which can be clearly witnessed at present. Man-made legislations and systems are unstable, often needing revision and change. What suits one society may not suit another, and what suits one time period may not suit another. The legislations and systems of a capitalist society, for example, are not suitable in a communist society. Anyone who tries to introduce legislations and systems into a particular society must take their particular goals and views into consideration. Furthermore, a person with more insight and knowledge may appear, introducing concepts which contradict or add to the previous legislation.

As for the legislation of Islam, it is, as we described, of a divine origin. The one who legislated it is the Creator of all things, the One who knows what best suits their particular conditions and what rectifies their affairs. No one, no matter what status and station he may achieve, has the right to oppose, change, add, or omit from this legislation. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Is it the judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance that they seek? And who is better in judgment than Allah for a people who have firm belief.» [5:50]

[6] The religion of Islam is a religion whose texts are general, making it suitable for all times and places. It has introduced general principles and teachings which are unalterable; they are not influenced by the passage of time or change of locality, whether they be principles dealing with belief, such as the belief in Allah, His Angels, Books, Messengers, the Last Day, and Predestination; or principles of worship, such as the specific actions of prayer and their timings, the amount to be given in *Zakaah* (obligatory charity) and to whom it is to be given to, the time of the obligatory Fast, and the characteristics, time and regulations of Hajj.

Every new matter which should appear in the world must be scrutinized in light of the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) in order that it be given a ruling. If a clear ruling cannot be taken from the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding the issue, the pious, god-fearing scholars should exert their effort to derive a textual-based ruling, keeping the Muslim's interest in mind, and to consider the conditions of his age and society. This is done by examining the general meaning of the verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ) and studying their jurisprudential maxims, such as the following:

1. All things are considered lawful in the religion, unless a specific or general text renders it to be unlawful.
2. Protecting and safeguarding benefits and common interests of society.
3. Islam is a religion of ease, which seeks to remove all unnecessary hardship.
4. Harm must be avoided.
5. Preventing evil by preventing the means through which it spreads.
6. Dire needs render unlawful things as lawful.
7. Dire needs legalize the unlawful according to the situation.

8. Warding harm is given precedence to attaining benefits.
9. If one has no choice but to do one of two evils; he should do the lesser of the two.
10. Harm should not be warded off with a similar harm.
11. Specific harms should be withheld for the sake of warding off general harms.

There are many other jurisprudential maxims similar to these. Upon making a textual-based ruling, the scholar should not be affected by his desires; nor should he utilize it to gain some personal benefits; he should try his best to benefit society without opposing a textual proof, for Islam is suitable for every age, and fulfills the necessities of every society.

[7] There are no prejudices in the religion of Islam. Every item of its legislation applies to everyone; there is no difference between the rich and poor, noble and commoner, ruler and subject or white and black. Everyone is equal in relation to the implementation of *Shari'ah* law.

During the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) a woman from the clan of *Makhzoom* from the tribe of the *Quraish* (the most noble clan of the most noble tribe) committed theft.

Some of those around him said, **“Who will intercede with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on her behalf?”** Others said, **“Who can be so bold other than Usaamah bin Zaid, the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”** Usaamah tried to intercede, but the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, **“Do you try to intercede in one of the set punishments of Allah?”**

He then stood and addressed them, saying:

“O People, the thing which destroyed those before you was that if one of their noble committed a theft, they did not punish him, but if one of their common folk stole, they established Allah’s fixed punishment upon

him. By Allah, if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, committed a theft, I would cut her hand off.⁷

[*Muslim*]

[8] The textual sources of the religion of Islam are still present today in their original forms, free from any omission, addition, or substitution. The main sources of the religion of Islam are the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ).

The Qur'an at present is still in its original form, as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), with the same letters, verses, and chapters. It has not been altered in the least.

The Prophet (ﷺ) assigned scribes from the best of his companions to write what had been revealed to him, such as 'Ali, Mu'aawiyah, Ubay bin Ka'b, and Zaid bin Thaabit. Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) received revelation, he ordered his scribes to record what was revealed to him, informing them exactly in which chapter and verse to place it. The Qur'an was memorized and preserved in books as well as in the hearts of the Muslims.

Muslims paid great importance to the Book of Allah. They raced and competed with each other to learn and teach it, all in order to receive the reward which the Prophet (ﷺ) promised:

“The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it.” [*al-Bukhari*]

They spent their time and wealth in order to serve, take care of, and memorize the Qur'an. The Muslim masses transmitted it from one generation to the next (keeping in mind that its memorization and recital is considered an act of worship.) The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

⁷ The fixed punishment for stealing in Islam is cutting off the hand. There are conditions that must be met before this punishment is implemented.

“Whoever recites one letter of the Qur'an, he will receive ten rewards. I do not mean that ‘Alif Laam Meem’ is one letter, rather, ‘Alif’ is a letter, ‘Laam’ is a letter, and ‘Meem’ is a letter.” [at-Tirmidhi]

The second source of legislation is the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) which acts as an explanation and clarification of the Qur'an. Allah has protected it from adulteration and all types of distortion by means of trustworthy and pious scholars who sacrificed their lives to study the *hadeeths* of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and its chains of narration, investigating whether they can actually be attributed to him or not. They looked at each individual in the chain of narration and researched them, seeing if they were pious and trustworthy. They sifted all the *hadeeths* which were narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) and did not accept anything except after it was proven authentic. These *hadeeths* reached us free of any fabrication. Whoever wishes to research the methodology employed in the preservation of the Sunnah, they may refer to the books of the science of Hadeeth. It will become clear to anyone who researches this science that there is no doubt concerning the narrations which have reached us, and they will also realize the great effort made by scholars in the service of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Sunnah.

[9] The religion of Islam regards all people as equals in their nature, whether in regards to sex, color, or language. The first human who Allah created was Adam (ﷺ). He is the father of all mankind. He then created from Adam his wife, Eve, the mother of all humanity, and made them to procreate. In their original nature and creation, all humans are equal. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women. And fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual [rights], and [do not cut the relations of] the wombs (kinship).﴾ [4:1]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah has rid you of the [different types of] pride [you unjustly felt] during your days of ignorance before Islam, and [specifically] the ignorance of taking pride in your ancestry. [People are either two types:] a believer who fears Allah, or a disbelieving and doomed sinner. All people are children of Adam, and Adam [was created] from soil.” [at-Tirmidhi]

All previous and future human generations are from the progeny of Adam. All humans had one religion and one language, but as they grew in number, they spread across the earth and inhabited different lands, the result of which was that they differed in color, nature, and spoke different languages. This also led them to differ in their thoughts, lifestyles, and beliefs.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Mankind were but one community [i.e. on one religion], then they differed (later), and had not it been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord, it would have been settled between them regarding what they differed.﴾ [10:19]

The teachings of Islam render all people equal, giving no consideration to their sex, race, language, or nation. All are equal in front of Allah. They only differ in regards to their implementation of the religion of Allah in their lives. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is he who has the most piety and God-consciousness.﴾ [49:13]

According to the equality which is acknowledged in Islam, all humans are regarded as equal in their freedom, though regulated

by the religion, so as not to allow animalistic liberty for doing whatever they please.

In Islam, all humans are to be guaranteed the following rights:

A) The freedom to think and voice one's opinion. Islam encourages its followers to speak the truth and express their thoughts and opinions, those which are constructive and focused, without fearing any blame. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The best type of *jihad*⁸ is a word of truth in the face of an oppressive ruler or leader.” [Abu Dawood]

The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) implemented this principle. Once a man said to ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, the second Caliph,

“Fear Allah O Commander of the Faithful!” Another interjected and said, **“Do you dare tell the Commander of the Faithful to fear Allah!?”** Upon that, ‘Umar said to him: **“Leave him and let him say it, for indeed there is no good in you if you do not say that to us, and there is no good in us if we do not accept it.”**

On another occasion ‘Ali judged in a specific issue according to his opinion. When ‘Umar, who was the Caliph at that time, was asked about this judgment, he replied:

“If I were asked I would have judged with (such and such)…” When he was asked what stopped him from refuting ‘Ali while he was the Commander of the Faithful, he replied: **“If that were in the Qur'an or *Hadeeth*, I would have refuted him, but it was his opinion, and opinions can be either right or wrong: no one knows which opinion holds more truth according to Allah.”**

B) All have the right to own and earn a permissible livelihood. Allah (ﷻ) says:

⁸ **Jihad**: To strive in the way of Allah so that His Word and Religion may be made supreme.

﴿And wish not for the things in which Allah has made some of you to excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned, (and likewise) for women there is reward for what they have earned.﴾ [4:32]

C) All have the right to gain knowledge. Islam considers the seeking of knowledge to be an obligation. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon all Muslims.”
[*Ibn Maajah*]

D) All have the right to utilize the good and pure things Allah has stored in this universe, according to the guidelines of the religion. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿He it is, Who has made the earth subservient to you (i.e. easy for you to walk, to live and to do agriculture on it, etc.), so walk in the path thereof and eat of His provision, and to Him will be the Resurrection.﴾ [67:15]

E) All have the right to fill the role of leadership in society, with the condition of course that they have the necessary skills and abilities to do so. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever is given some authority over the Muslims and acts treacherously will enter Hellfire.” [*Ahmad*]

Islam considers giving authority to those who are not fit as a betrayal of the trust given to us by Allah, and this is an indication of the nearness of the destruction of the world and the advent of the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If the trust is betrayed, then await the striking of the Hour.” (One of his companions asked): **“How is it betrayed O Messenger of Allah?”** He replied: **“When authority is given to those who are not fit, then await the striking of the Hour.”** [*al-Bukhari*]

F) Islam has no autonomic spiritual authority with absolute power like those in other religions. This is due to the fact that Islam abolished the practice of taking intermediaries between

Allah and His slaves. Allah condemned the polytheists because it led them to their worship. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Surely, the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allah only. And those who take protectors, helpers, and intercessors besides Him (say): ‘We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah.’» [40:3]

Allah exposed the reality of these intermediaries, clarifying that they neither have the ability to bring benefit nor inflict harm, nor can they suffice themselves in the least. Rather, they are creatures as those who worship them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily, those whom you call upon besides Allah are only slaves like yourselves. So call upon them and let them answer you if indeed you are truthful.» [7:194]

Islam strengthened the notion of a direct relationship between Allah and His slaves. This relationship is built upon believing in Him Alone in all respects and turning to Him directly in seeking one's needs, repentance, help and support, without seeking mediation from any intercessors. If a person commits a sin, he raises his hands and humbles himself before Allah alone, seeking forgiveness from Him, whenever and wherever he may be. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's Forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.» [4:110]

There is no clergy in Islam which make things permissible or impermissible of their own accord. None have the right to forgive others for the sins they committed against Allah or regard themselves as God's agents to His slaves, legislating new laws in the religion, changing set statutes of beliefs, forgiving sin, and granting Paradise to whom they deem fit. The right of legislation is exclusively for Allah. In explanation of the following verse:

«**They (the Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their gods besides Allah.**» [9:31]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

”They (the Christians and the Jews) did not worship them (by praying to them, etc.) but when [the priests and rabbis] made something permissible for them, they took it to be permissible, and when they made something impermissible for them, they also made it impermissible.”

[at-Tirmidhi]

G) The religion of Islam has given certain rights to every individual, each according to their different roles in society. This is to ensure that life carries on smoothly and in the best manner, and that all may take full benefit from the religion. Parents, children, relatives, neighbors, friends, etc. all have specific rights mandated for them in Islam. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer [you meet], and those [slaves] whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful.**» [4:36]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not envy each other, do not praise an item or offer a higher price if you are not intending to buy it, do not hate each other, do not turn your backs on each other (by cutting ties), and let not one of you offer to sell something for a lesser price when he knows that his brother is about to strike a deal. Rather, be slaves of Allah and be brothers. The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; he is not unjust to him, and he does not betray him, deceive him, nor belittle him. Piety and God-

consciousness is here,” pointing to his heart thrice. **“It is enough evil that a person belittles his Muslim brother. It is prohibited to transgress against a Muslim’s blood, wealth, and honor.”** [*Muslim*]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said:

“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” [*al-Bukhari*]

Even those who show enmity to Islam have rights. *Abu Azeez bin Umair* the brother of *Mus‘ab bin Umair* said:

“I was taken captive in the Battle of Badr. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ‘Treat the prisoners well.’ I was amongst a group of the *Ansaar*⁹, and when they ate their lunch and dinner, they themselves would eat dates while they would feed me bread¹⁰ due to what the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered them.” [*at-Tabaraani*]

The religion of Islam even gives animals certain rights as well.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by an emaciated camel due to hunger, he said:

“Fear Allah in regards to these animals, [a creation] which can not speak their will. If you ride them, then treat them accordingly (by making them strong and fit for that), and if you eat them, then treat them accordingly (by making them fat and healthy).” [*Abu Dawood*]

Islam legislates certain rights which individuals must give to a group, and other rights which a group must offer to an individual. The individual should keep the interest of the group

⁹ *Ansaar*: Literally, the 'Helpers'. The Muslims of Madinah who received the Prophet and His companions from Makkah.

¹⁰ The arabs relied on dates when there was nothing else to eat.

in mind, and the group should keep the interest of the individual in mind. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The believers are like a solid structure, each one (brick) strengthens the other,” and then he clasped his hands and intertwined his fingers. [*al-Bukhari*]

When the two interests are in opposition, the interest of the group should be upheld over the interest of the individual; for example, a house which is about to collapse should be demolished because it may harm those who pass by it, and the owner should be reimbursed.

[10] Islam is the religion of mercy, love and compassion, and it forbids harshness. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The All-Merciful shows mercy to those who show mercy. Show mercy to those on Earth, and you will be shown mercy by the One above the heavens. The womb is derived from My name *Ar-Rahman*. Whoever maintains its ties [of kinship], Allah will continue to have mercy on him, but whoever severs its ties, he will be severed from Allah’s mercy.” [*at-Tirmidhi*]

Mercy in the religion of Islam is not confined to humans; rather, mercy is shown to animals as well. A woman entered Hellfire because she tortured her cat. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A woman was punished due to a cat. She imprisoned it until it died, so she entered Hellfire on account of that. She did not feed it nor give it drink; she locked it up, and did not set it free to eat the insects (and other things) of the earth.” [*al-Bukhari*]

Showing kindness and mercy to animals is a means of entering Paradise. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Once a man was tending to some business and became very thirsty. He came across a well and descended into it and drank from it. [When he came out,] he saw a dog panting and rolling his mouth in dirt [in search of water]

due to thirst. The man said, ‘This dog is as thirsty as I was.’ So he descended [once again] filled his boot with water and gave water to the dog. [Due to that] Allah rewarded him by forgiving him his sins.” One of those around the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “O Messenger of Allah, will we be rewarded on account of our well-treatment of animals?” He replied, “Yes indeed. For [the well-treatment of] every fresh liver (living thing) you will receive reward.” [*al-Bukhari*]

If this is the mercy Islam shows to animals, what is the status of mercy that it shows to humans, a creature Allah has preferred and honored over all other creatures? Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And indeed We have honored the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with all lawful good things, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference.﴾ [17:70]

[11] Islam does not allow celibacy, monasticism, and the rejection of lawful worldly joys. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not make things hard upon yourselves so that things will be made hard for you, for indeed a people made things hard on themselves and Allah made things hard upon them, and this is what is left of them from their places of worship and homes.” Then he recited the verse:

﴿But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but [they sought it] only to please Allah therewith, but that they did not observe it with the right observance.﴾ [57:27]

¹¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

¹¹ Abu Dawood.

“Eat, drink, and give charity without going into excesses or pride and vanity. Indeed Allah loves to see the traces of His bounties on His slave.” [al-Haakim]

At the same time, Islam does not permit a person to indulge in this materialistic life or engross himself in its desires and entertainments without any guidelines. Rather, it is a religion of moderateness which balances the individual's life between this world and the next, making each complimentary to the other.

It orders that a person balance between the requirements of his body and soul. For example, when a Muslim is busy carrying out the requirements of his daily life, it orders him to remember the requirements of his soul through worship. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the prayer on the day of Friday, come to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business [and every other thing], that is better for you if you did but know!» [62:9]

Furthermore, when a Muslim is busy seeking his livelihood, it reminds him not to disregard his material needs and sustenance. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Then when the [Friday] prayer is finished, you may disperse through the land, and seek the Bounty of Allah (by working, etc.).» [62:10]

Islam praises those who gather the good of both aspects. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Men whom neither trade nor sale diverts them from the Remembrance of Allah, or from performing the prayers, nor from giving obligatory charity. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will be overturned (from the horror of the torment of the Day of Resurrection).» [24:37]

Islam has preserved the rights of the soul, body and intellect as allocated in the *Shari'ah*, which is not extreme in any perspective. The Muslim is charged with safeguarding himself

and taking into account everything he does, as is clarified by the words of Allah:

﴿So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it.﴾ [99:7-8]

He should not deny his body the lawful worldly pleasures, whether foods, drink, clothing, marriage, or work. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad (ﷺ)]: ‘Who has forbidden the adoration with clothes given by Allah, which He has produced for his slaves, and all kinds of good and pure things of His Sustenance?’﴾ [7:32]

Islam has only forbidden filthy and harmful things, whether they cause harm to the minds, bodies, wealth, or society; for the human soul was created by Allah (ﷻ), and He made them successors on the earth in order to worship Him and implement His legislations. No one has the right to destroy or bring these things to an end, except if Islam grants him the right. Allah created a suitable and complete body for this soul so that it may fulfill the commandments of Allah in regards to worship, rights, and other obligations, as well as to develop this world. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We created man of the best stature.﴾ [95:4]

Due to this reason, Allah (ﷻ) ordered us to safeguard and take care of this body in accordance to the guidelines set in the Religion. Therefore, Islam has legislated the following:

A) Purification: Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Truly, Allah loves those who constantly turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.﴾ [2:222]

Allah has made ablution a condition for the validity of the prayer which a Muslim establishes five times a day. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No Prayer is accepted without purification, and no charity is accepted from earnings made from impermissible sources.” [Muslim]

Allah (ﷻ) also ordered that one take a complete bath after sexual discharge or intercourse, as in His (ﷻ) words:

﴿And if you have had sexual discharge, then purify yourself by bathing your whole body.﴾ [5:6]

Allah has made having a complete bath highly commendable when performing congregational worship, such as the Friday Prayer, celebrations of ‘Eid, and Hajj and ‘Umrah (the greater and lesser pilgrimages).

B) Maintaining hygiene, which is done through the following:

1. Washing one’s hands before and after meals and washing one’s mouth after eating. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“After eating food, if one finds some food between his teeth, let him remove it, and if one of you finds some leftover in his mouth, let him swallow it. Whoever does that, does what is better and good, and whoever does not, then there is no harm.”
[Abu Dawood]

2. Maintaining cleanliness of the mouth and teeth. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Had it not been for the fact that I would overburden my nation, I would have ordered them to use the *siwak* (tooth-stick) before every Prayer.”

[al-Bukhari & Muslim]

3. Cleaning the places that may become a breeding ground for germs and filth. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“There are five acts which are from the innate nature with which Allah created man: circumcision, shaving of the pubic hair, plucking

the hair of the armpits, shortening the moustache, and clipping the nails.” [al-Bukhari]

4. Eating and drinking only those things which are pure, lawful and wholesome. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Eat of the good and lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed He Whom you worship.﴾ [2:172]

The religion has laid out guidelines by which one can enjoy good and pure things in a way such that it maintains moderateness without going into excess, since it would be detrimental to health. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not those who waste by extravagance.﴾ [7:31]

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained how one should eat, saying:

“Man does not fill a vessel worse than his stomach. It is enough for the child of Adam that he takes a few bites which will straighten his back. If you must [eat more] then a third [of the stomach should be allotted] for food, a third for water, and a third for breathing.” [at-Tirmidhi & ibn Maajah]

5. Islam has prohibited consuming anything filthy or impure, whether it is food or drink, such as carrion, blood, swine, intoxicants, drugs, or cigarettes. One must preserve their health. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿He has forbidden you only carrion and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for other than Allah. But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience or transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ [2:173]

Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, *al-ansaab*, and *al-azlaam* (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So avoid strictly all that [abomination] in order that you may be successful. Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from the prayer. So, will you not then abstain?﴾ [5:90-1]

6. Taking part in beneficial sports, such as wrestling. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself once wrestled a man named Rakaanah. [*al-Haakim*]

Other beneficial sports include swimming, horseback riding, and archery. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه), the second Caliph and one of the closest companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), said:

“Teach your children archery, swimming, and horse riding.”

7. Seeking cure upon falling ill. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah has [created] diseases as well as cures. For every disease there is a cure, but do not seek cure in the prohibited.” [*Abu Dawood*]

8. It orders that we establish worship. Acts of worship nourish the soul. A soul that is not nourished with acts of worship is one in agony. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest﴾ [13:28]

Islam considers neglecting the needs of the body and denying it its right; such as rest, nutrition, and marriage a sin. *Anas bin Malik* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“Three people came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) asking about the worship of the Prophet (ﷺ). When they were informed, they thought it was insufficient for them and said, **“Who are we in comparison to the Prophet (ﷺ) for indeed Allah has forgiven him his past and future sins.”** One of them said, **“As for me, I will pray the whole night.”** Another said, **“I will fast every day without rest,”** and the other said, **“I will stay away from women and never marry.”** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came [and when he heard this, he] said, **“Are you the people who said such and such? As for me, by Allah, indeed I am the most fearing of Allah and pious amongst you, yet I fast and eat, I pray and sleep and I marry women. Whoever desires other than my Sunnah is not from me.”** [al-Bukhari]

[12] Islam is a Religion which encourages people to seek knowledge. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not?﴾ [39:9]

It dispraises ignorance and the ignorant. Allah (ﷻ) mentions in the Qur'an that Moses said:

﴿I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant and foolish.﴾ [2:67]

There are certain types of knowledge which are mandatory upon every Muslim to learn; this knowledge relates to the Muslim's daily life, worldly and religious affairs. Other types of knowledge are considered a collective duty (i.e. if some learn it, the sin of not learning would not encompass the entire society).

Allah did not order His Prophet (ﷺ) to desire more of anything in this life except knowledge. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.﴾ [20:114]

Islam gives high regard to scholars and gaining knowledge. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“He is not from my followers: he, who does not respect his elders, nor shows mercy to the young, nor gives due right to a scholar.” [at-Tirmidhi]

Islam has given scholars an honored status. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The excellence of a scholar over a worshipper is like my excellence over the least of you.” [at-Tirmidhi]

In order to spread knowledge and encourage that it be sought, Islam has considered seeking, learning, and teaching knowledge a type of striving for which a person receives reward and a path which leads to Paradise. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever seeks knowledge is considered to be in *Jihad* until he returns.” [at-Tirmidhi]

He (ﷺ) also said:

“Whoever treads a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. No group of people gather in a *Masjid* to recite the Book of Allah and study it, except that peace and tranquility descend upon them, they are enveloped in mercy, the angels surround them, and Allah mentions them to those present with Him. Whoever’s deeds prevent him [from attaining Paradise] his lineage would be of no benefit to him [on the Day of Judgment].” [Muslim]

Islam not only encourages seeking religious knowledge; rather, it encourages learning all beneficial knowledge. This is considered a collective duty upon the Muslim nation and is considered an act of worship. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of varying colors, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colors and (others) very black, And of men and

moving living creatures, and cattle, in like manner of various colors. It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, Oft-Forgiving.﴾ [35:27-28]

These verses call mankind to ponder and think; which in turn would lead them to affirm the existence of a creator who created all things, it also tells us to benefit from all that Allah has placed in the universe. There is no doubt that those who are called to think in these verses are not the scholars of the religion alone; rather, it includes scholars in other fields who have the ability to discover the secrets Allah has stored in this universe.

For example, one learns how clouds are formed and rain falls through chemistry and physics. Similarly, one learns how plants, fruits and crops grow through the knowledge of agriculture, one learns about mountains through geology, and one learns about the forms of humans and animals through genealogy.

[13] The religion of Islam encourages people to constantly review their deeds and actions. This in turn causes Muslims to strive and do their utmost and stay away from everything which angers Allah (ﷻ).

Muslims know well that Allah sees them and knows what they do, so they do what they are ordered and refrain from the unlawful. When a Muslim refrains from theft, he does so on account of his fear of Allah, not because he fears humans. Islam harmonizes man's outward and inward actions. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And if you speak aloud, then verily, He knows the secret and that which is even more hidden.﴾ [20:7]

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) described *Ihsaan*¹² as:

“...to worship Allah as though you see Him. Even though you do not see Him, for He sees you.” [al-Bukhari]

¹² *Ihsaan*: The level a person reaches when his deeds are done perfectly for Allah alone, knowing that He is watching him.

Keeping one's actions and deeds in check are a result of the following beliefs:

A) The belief that Allah is the only One Who deserves to be worshipped. He is perfect in all aspects; He knows all of what takes place in this universe, and nothing occurs except if He wills it. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«He knows what goes into the earth and what comes forth from it, what descends from the heaven and what ascends thereto. And He is with you (by his knowledge) wherever you may be. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.» [57:4]

His knowledge surpasses material and tangible things. He knows the sentiments and whisperings of the soul. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And indeed We have created man, and We know what his own self whispers to him. And We are nearer to him (by Our knowledge) than his Jugular vein.» [50:16]

B) To believe that Allah will resurrect all people on the Day of Judgment. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected. Say: Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will be informed of what you did, and that is easy for Allah.» [64:7]

C) To believe that each individual shall be held accountable for all that he has done. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«...and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.» [6:164]

Every person shall be held accountable before Allah for everything they did or said, no matter how minute these actions may seem, both good and evil. They will be rewarded for their good deeds, punished for their sins. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So whosoever does good equal to the weight of a small ant shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of a small ant shall see it.﴾ [99:7-8]

D) The obedience of Allah and His Messenger must be given priority over everything. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight... are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (punishment). And Allah guides not the people who are obstinate in their rebelliousness and sinfulness.﴾ [9:24]

[14] In Islam, rewards of good deeds are multiplied, while the recompense of evil deeds is not. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit, and whoever brings an evil deed shall have only the recompense of the like thereof.﴾ [6:160]

A person is rewarded for merely intending to do good, even if they do not follow up that intention with action. Furthermore, if a Muslim intends to do an evil deed but does not do it out of fear of Allah, they will be rewarded as well, for they left it for Allah's sake. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned that Allah said¹³:

“If My slave intends to do any evil, do not record it as an evil deed until he does it. If he does, do not record it except as one sin, and if he leaves it for My sake, record for him one good deed. If he intends to do any deed of righteousness but does not do it, record for him one good deed. If he does it, then record for him the like of that deed up to seven hundred times.” [al-Bukhari]

¹³ This type of narration is called **Hadeeth Qudsi**: a Hadeeth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) narrates from Allah (ﷻ) in the first person (I).

Moreover, fulfilling the soul's lawful desires is considered an act of worship, if the person's intention is correct. If a person intends to eat and drink in order to keep his body healthy, or to earn a living and provide for his family and other dependants, this will be considered an act of worship and he will be rewarded on account of it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If a person spends on his family seeking reward from Allah, it will be like charity for him.” [*al-Bukhari*]

All deeds that a Muslim does, even keeping a good intention, is considered a charity. The Prophet said:

“‘Every Muslim must give charity.’ They (his Companions) said: **‘And if they have nothing to give charity with?’** He replied: **‘He should work with his hands benefiting himself and give charity.’** They said: **‘And if he is unable’** He said: **‘He should help a suffering person in need.’** They said: **‘If he cannot’.** He said: **‘He should enjoin the good.’** They said: **‘And if he does not.’** He said: **‘He should avoid evil, and that will be his charity.’ ”** [*al-Bukhari*]

[15] In Islam, if one commits a sin, then truly repents, making a firm commitment not to return to it, the evil deed which was recorded is replaced with a good one. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And those who invoke not any other god along with Allah, nor kill such life as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse; whoever does this shall receive punishment. He will repeatedly face the torment on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace. Except those who repent and believe and do righteous deeds, for those, Allah will change their sins into good deeds, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.» [25:68-70]

This is in regards to the rights of Allah. As for the rights of people, they must be returned and forgiveness must be sought from them if their rights were transgressed.

Islam addresses the intellect of the sinner and rids them of their confusion by allowing them to repent and abandon that sin. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Say: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.» [39:53]

The religion of Islam has made the path to repentance easy. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's Forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.» [4:110]

This is in regards to Muslims. As for non-Muslims who have accepted Islam, they will be given their reward in double, due to their belief in their messengers as well as their belief in Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it, - they believe in it (the Qur'an). And when it is recited to them, they say: 'We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed even before it we have been from those who submit themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims.' These will be given their reward twice over, because they are patient, and repel evil with good, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them.» [28:52-4]

In addition to this, Allah effaces all the sins they did before accepting Islam. When 'Amr ibn ul-'Aas came to accept Islam, he made a condition that Allah would forgive all his sins. Upon that, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Don't you know that Islam effaces all [the sins one did] before it?” [Muslim]

16] The Religion of Islam guarantees that its followers continuously receive the rewards for their good deeds they

performed in their worldly lives, even after they pass away. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"When a person dies, he ceases to receive the reward for his [good] deeds except for three: a charity which continues to benefit people after his death, beneficial knowledge, and a pious child who supplicates to Allah for him." [Muslim]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said:

"Whoever calls people to a guidance (good act) he will receive rewards equal to the rewards of those who do that act, while their rewards is not lessened. Whoever calls people to a misguidance (evil act), he receives sin equal to the sins of those who do that act, while their sins are not lessened." [Muslim]

This is one of the reasons why a Muslim tries his best to reform and rectify the wrongs of his society, by doing good deeds, promoting righteousness, and fighting evil and warning people from it.

[17] Islam is a religion which respects one's intellect and thought, and has called man to use them appropriately. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily, in the heavens and the earth are signs for the believers. And in your creation, and what He scattered (through the earth) of moving (living) creatures are signs for people who have Faith with certainty. And in the alternation of night and day, and the provision (rain) that Allah sends down from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the turning about of the winds, are signs for a people who understand.» [45:3-5]

Many verses in the Qur'an address the intellect and encourage the person to think. Many times, Allah says in the Qur'an: **«Do they not understand?»**, **«Do they not reflect?»**, **«Do they not think and ponder?»** Although this importance has been given

to the intellect, Islam limits the circumstances in which it should be used. One should only use it to comprehend physical, tangible things, not matters pertaining to the unseen world, for this is futile and a waste of energy.

One of the apparent ways that Islam respects unadulterated intellect is that it reprimands those who blindly follow others without knowledge, or guidance. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿When it is said to them: Follow what Allah has sent down. They say: Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following. Even though their fathers did not understand anything nor were they guided?﴾ [2:170]

[18] The Religion of Islam conforms to *fitrah*: the natural disposition of man with which Allah created him. Therefore, Islam does not contradict the man's nature. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Allah's *Fitrah* (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in the [religion of Allah] that is the straight Religion but most men know not.﴾ [30:30]

This *fitrah* can sometimes be tainted by external factors, thus causing it to deviate from its correct path. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No newborn is born except on the true *fitrah* but his parents make him a Christian, a Jew, or a Zoroastrian.”
[*al-Bukhari*]

It is the religion which leads to the Straight Path. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad (ﷺ)]: Truly, my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a right Religion, the Religion of Abraham, who turned away from all false religions, and he was not among those who associated partners with Allah.﴾ [6:161]

Nothing in Islam contradicts one's unadulterated intellect; rather, sound intellect attests to the truth, suitability, and benefit of the teachings of Islam. All its commandments and prohibitions are

just. Islam does not command anything except for an absolute or relative benefit. Likewise, it has forbidden things due to the fact they are evil, or because its evil outweighs its good. This fact becomes clear when one ponders the Qur'an and *hadeeths* of the Messenger (ﷺ).

[19] Islam liberated humans from worshipping creatures to the exclusion of Allah or along with Allah, whether those objects of worship are Prophets, Angels, or anything else, to worshipping Allah alone. This is achieved by establishing the fact that no one can extend benefit, ward harm, or provide sustenance except Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Yet they have taken besides Him other deities that created nothing but rather are themselves created, and do not possess the ability to neither harm nor benefit for themselves, and possess no power (of causing) death, nor (of giving) life, nor of raising the dead.﴾ [25:3]

All matters are in the Hands of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And if Allah touches you with harm, there is none who can remove it but He; and if He intends any good for you, there is none who can repel His Favor which He grants to whomsoever of His slaves He wills.﴾ [10:107]

This applies to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as well, irrespective of his status with Allah. If it applies to him, then it necessarily applies to others as well. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad (ﷺ)]: I possess no power of benefit or harm to myself except as Allah wills. If I had the knowledge of the Unseen, I would have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil would have touched me. I am but a warner and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe.﴾ [7:188]

Islam has liberated and relieved man from stress, fear and confusion by resolving its causes; for example:

Allah has relieved humans from the fear of death by stating that it is an inevitable fact in His Hands. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And no person can ever die except by Allah's Leave and at an appointed term.» [3:145]

However much man tries to flee from death... it will overcome him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Say (to them): Verily, the death from which you flee will surely meet you.» [62:8]

Allah (ﷻ) has freed humans from the fear of poverty and destitution. He says:

«And no (moving) living creature is there on earth but its provision is due from Allah. And He knows its dwelling place and its deposit (in the uterus, grave, etc.). All is in a Clear Book.» [11:6]

As for the fear of disease and other afflictions, Allah (ﷻ) says:

«No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees, before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah. In order that you may not be sad over matters that you fail to obtain, nor rejoice because of that which has been given to you. And Allah likes not prideful boasters.» [57:22]

About harm from anything of the creation, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Safeguard yourselves from transgressing the limits of Allah, and Allah will safeguard you. Safeguard yourselves from transgressing the limits of Allah, and Allah will guide you and safeguard you from the hardships of this world and the Hereafter. Be mindful of Allah in times of ease, and He will remember you in times of (your) hardship. If you ask, ask Allah, and if you seek help, seek help from Allah. All that will take place has been recorded. If people try to extend you any benefit which Allah has not ordained for you, they will never be

able to. And if people try to harm you with something which Allah has not ordained for you, they will never be able to. If you are capable of bearing patiently with certainty, then do so. If you cannot, bear patiently, for doing so over things you dislike leads to much good. Know that victory is achieved through patience, and that after anguish comes relief, and with hardship comes ease.”

[*al-Haakim*]

[20] Islam is a religion which enjoins moderateness, both in religious and worldly matters. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Thus We have made you [Muslims] a just and balanced nation, that you be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger (Muhammad (ﷺ)) be a witness over you.»
[2:143]

It is a religion of ease. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Allah did not send me to make things difficult, obstinate and inflexible; rather, [he sent me] as a teacher and to make things easy.” [*Muslim*]

Its teachings enjoin Muslims to try to make things easy whenever possible. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Give glad-tidings, and do not make things hard for people ; rather make things easy and do not make things hard.” [*Muslim*]

It is a Religion of tolerance and kindness. A'ishah the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ) said that a group of Jews came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said:

“Death be upon you.” A'ishah replied, **“And upon you be death and curses.”** She said: **“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, ”Easy O A'ishah. Indeed Allah loves kindness in all matters.“** I said, **“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did you not**

hear what they said?“ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied, ”I already said, ‘And upon you.’” [al-Bukhari]

It is a Religion which seeks the well-being of all people. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The best people in the sight of Allah are those who bring the most benefit to others. The best deeds in the sight of Allah are those which bring joy to another Muslim, bring him some relief, pay off a debt, or satiate another’s hunger. That I walk with a Muslim in fulfilling his need is more beloved to me than if I seclude myself in devotion in a *Masjid* for a month. Whoever restrains his anger, Allah will keep his private affairs hidden. Whoever suppresses his rage when he is able to take vengeance, Allah will fill his heart with pleasure on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever walks with his Muslim brother to fulfill his needs until he fulfills it, Allah will make his feet firm on a day in which people’s feet slip. Indeed bad manners spoil one’s deeds as vinegar spoils honey.” [at-Tabaraani]

It is a religion of moderateness not of hardship. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He will receive reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he will be punished for that (evil) which he has earned.﴾
[2:286]

All the commandments of Islam are built upon this principle. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whatever I have prohibited you, avoid it. And whatever I have ordered you, do as much of it as possible, for indeed those before you were destroyed due to their persistent questioning and differing with their prophets.”
[Muslim]

The best evidence for this is the story of the Companion who came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said:

“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) I am destroyed!” He said, **‘What is wrong with you?’** The Companion said, **‘I had intercourse with my wife while I was fasting.’** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, **Are you able to free a slave?’** **He replied in the negative.** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, **‘Are you able to fast for two consecutive months?’** **He replied in the negative.** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, **‘Are you able to feed sixty poor people?’** **He replied in the negative.** The Prophet (ﷺ) waited a while, and when we were in that same state, a person came by with a container of dates, a container of the type woven from date-palms. He (the Messenger ﷺ) said, **‘Where is the questioner?’** The man replied, **‘I am.’** He said, **‘Take this and give it as charity.’** So the man said, **‘Shall I give it as charity to someone poorer than me O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?** **By Allah, there is no family in Medina poorer than my family.’** The Prophet (ﷺ) laughed [smiled] until his teeth showed and said, **‘Feed your family.’**” [al-Bukhari]

All commandments and acts of worship in Islam have been legislated according to a person’s ability; a person is never overburdened. A Muslim may even be excused from performing these commandments and acts of worship, as is demonstrated in the following cases:

- a. One of the pillars of prayer is to perform it while in a standing position if one is able to do so. If a Muslim cannot perform it while standing up, they may do so while sitting, and if they are not able, they may perform it while lying down on their sides. If they cannot even do that, they can perform it through gestures.
- b. If a person does not have the minimum required amount of money in his possession, he does not have to offer the obligatory charity (Zakaah). On the contrary, if the person is needy or poor, he is to be allotted a share of the Zakaah.
- c. Muslims are excused from fasting if they are sick. Women are also excused if they are pregnant, or if they are experiencing their menstrual periods or post-partum bleeding.

d. One is excused from performing Hajj if they are not able physically or financially. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And the performing of Hajj to the House [Kaaba] is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who have the ability.﴾ [3:97]

If a person fears that he will die out of hunger, it is permissible for him, according to his need, to eat and drink things normally forbidden, such as pork and wine. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him.﴾ [2:173]

[21] The Religion of Islam respects all divine religions in their unadulterated forms and obliges Muslims to believe in them and to love and respect the messengers which brought them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers saying, ‘We believe in some but reject others,’ and wish to adopt a way in between.﴾

Islam forbids a Muslim from insulting others’ beliefs or religion. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And insult not those whom they (the disbelievers) worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge.﴾ [6:108]

Rather, it commands one to discuss and argue with the disbelievers in a good, wise, and kind manner. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Invite to the path of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.﴾ [16:125]

It calls a person to pursue purposeful dialogue which would unite people upon the divine methodology. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as gods besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: “Bear witness that we are Muslims.”﴾ [3:64]

[22] Islam is a Religion of peace in the truest form; whether this is within society, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Shall I tell you who a true believer¹⁴ is? A person with whom others entrust their money and lives. A Muslim is him whom people are safe from (the evils of) his hands and tongue. A true *Mujaahid* (fighter in the path of Allah) is he who strives to obey Allah. The *Muhaajir* (is one who abandons sinful acts.” [Ahmad & Ibn Hibbaan]

...or on the global level, which is based on establishing mutual relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim societies based upon non-aggression,. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam, and follow not the footsteps of Satan. Verily! He is to you a clear enemy.﴾ [2:208]

Islam orders Muslims to resist aggression and to stop transgression. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Then whoever transgresses against you, transgress likewise against them.﴾ [2:194]

In order to ensure that peace prevails, Islam has ordered Muslims in times of battle to accept an armistice and stop fighting if the enemy asks for such. Allah (ﷻ) says:

¹⁴ A level of faith higher than that of a Muslim.

﴿But if they incline to peace, then you also incline to it, and (put your) trust in Allah. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.﴾ [8:61]

Although Islam is keen on maintaining peace, it does not seek it at the cost of Muslim's honor or their humiliation. On the contrary, it orders Muslims to maintain peace as well as their honor. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So be not weak and ask not for peace (from the enemies of Islam) while you have the upper hand. Allah is with you and He will never decrease the reward of your good deeds.﴾ [47:35]

[23] There is no compulsion in the religion of Islam, such that people must embrace it. People should only embrace it if they are convinced. Coercion is not a means to spread Islam and its teachings. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿There is no compulsion in Religion. Verily, the Right (Path of) guidance has become distinct from the wrong path.﴾ [2:256]

Faith and Guidance are in the Hands of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So will you then compel mankind until they become believers?﴾ [10:99]

[24] From the distinguishing features of Islam is that it allows those who oppose them from the People of the Book to practice their religions. Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) said:

“You will pass by some people who have devoted themselves to monasteries. Leave them and that to which they have devoted themselves.” [at-Tabari]

They are also given the freedom to eat and drink what their religions allow them. Their swine are not to be killed nor are their intoxicants to be spilled. In civil affairs such as marriage, divorce, financial dealings, they have the freedom to abide by

the legislations of their religions according to the conditions and guidelines Islam has established.

[25] Islam encourages Muslims to emancipate slaves and has promised a great reward for those who do so, and it is a means to Paradise. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever frees a slave, Allah will free each part [of the owner’s body] which he frees [of the slaves body] from the Hellfire (meaning his whole body)” [Muslim]

Islam has legalized only one way through which a person may be bound to slavery, which is to be taken captive in times of war. This is allowed with the condition that the leader of the Muslims commands them to do so, for in Islam, prisoners of war are dealt with in specific ways which Allah has commanded. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«So, when you meet those [in war] who disbelieve smite (their) necks, till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly [on them, i.e. take them as captives]. Thereafter [is the time] either for generosity (i.e. free them without ransom), or ransom [according to what benefits Islam], until the war lays down its burden.» [47:4]

Despite this, Islam has legislated many ways to free slaves. Emancipating a slave is expiation for certain sins in Islam, such as:

*Accidental manslaughter. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«It is not for a believer to kill a believer except [that it be] by mistake, and whosoever kills a believer by mistake, [it is ordained that] he must set free a believing slave and a compensation (blood money) be given to the deceased’s family, unless they remit it. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you and he was a believer; the freeing of a believing slave [is prescribed] and if he belonged to a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance,

compensation (blood money) must be paid to his family, and a believing slave must be freed.﴾ [4:91]

*Breaking an oath. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah will not punish you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He will punish you for your deliberate oaths [which you break]; for its expiation (a broken oath) feed ten poor persons, on a scale of the average of that with which you feed your own families; or clothe them; or manumit a slave.﴾ [5:89]

*Making one's wife forbidden upon himself.¹⁵ Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And those who make their wives unlawful to them and wish to free themselves from what they uttered, [the penalty] in that case [is] the freeing of a slave before they touch each other.﴾ [58:3]

*Sexual intercourse while fasting during the month of Ramadan. Abu Hurairah narrated that a man had sexual relation with his wife while he was fasting in Ramadan. When he told the Prophet (ﷺ) he replied:

“Can you free a slave?” He replied “No” He then said, “Can you fast for two consecutive months?” He replied, “No.” Then he said, “Then feed sixty poor people.” [Muslim]

*Islam has made it expiation for physically abusing a slave. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever slaps a slave or hits him, the expiation for that is to free him.” [Muslim]

¹⁵ In the period of Ignorance before the advent of Islam, the disbelievers had a custom of prohibiting themselves from their wives and vice versa as a result of a fight, etc. They would say, " You are like the back of my mother," and they would discontinue having marital relations.

The religion of Islam keenly seeks to free slaves, as can be seen in the following:

Islam orders people to accept a contract of emancipation. This is a contract between the master and his slave in which he is set free in return for an agreed sum of money. Some scholars have stated that it is obligatory upon the request of the slave, citing evidence from the verse:

﴿And such of your slaves as seek a writing (of emancipation) give them such writing, if you know that they are good and trustworthy. And give them something yourselves out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you.﴾ [24:33]

Islam has legislated that Zakaah (obligatory charity) be given in order to free slaves. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Charity (Zakaah) is only for the *fugaraa'* (poor) and *masaakeen* (the needy) and those employed to collect [the funds]; and to attract the hearts of those who are inclined [towards Islam]; and those [slaves] who wish to free themselves by a contract; and for those in debt; and for Allah's Cause, and for the wayfarer; a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.﴾ [9:60]

[26] The religion of Islam holds high regards for the status of women and gives her due honor. It has made honoring her a sign of a good, wholesome character. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The believers who have the most complete faith are those who are the best of them in character, and the best of you are the best of you towards their wives.”

[at-Tirmidhi]

Islam defends her human nature and does not blame her for the expulsion of Adam (ﷺ) from Paradise, nor is she considered the source of sin, as do some other religions. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him He created

his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women. And fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual [rights] and [do not cut the relations of] the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever a Watcher over you.﴾ [4:1]

Islam falsified the oppressive notions held against women, especially those which regard women as a being inferior to men; which, in turn leads them to being deprived of many of their basic human rights. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Verily women are the twin halves of men.”¹⁶

[Abu Dawood]

Islam has protected her honor and chastity; a castigatory punishment would be served in the right of those who falsely accuse them of fornication. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty lashes, and reject their testimony forever; they indeed are disobedient to Allah.﴾ [24:4]

Like men, Islam guarantees women their right to inheritance, a right they were deprived of prior to Islam. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether, the property be small or large - a legal share.﴾ [4:7]

Islam gives women the right to do as they please with their wealth, such as buying and selling in accordance to specific guidelines set in *Shari'ah*. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Spend of the good things which you have earned.﴾ [2:267]

¹⁶ i.e. women are similar to men in various religious rites.

Islam has made it an obligation that they be educated. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims.”

[Ibn Maajah]

It has also made it an obligation that they receive good upbringing and are raised properly; this is a cause by which one would enter Paradise. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever has three daughters whom he shelters, takes care of, and is merciful to, certainly enters Paradise.’ A man then said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, how about two?’ He said, ‘even two.’” *[al-Adab al-Mufrad]*

[27] Islam is the Religion of purity, both physical or spiritual.

Spiritual purity includes the following:

- Purity from the filth of associating partners with Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a great oppression and injustice.﴾ [31:13]

- Purity from the filth of doing deeds to show off. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So woe unto those performers of prayers. Who delay their prayer from their stated fixed times. Those who do good deeds only to be seen [of others]. And refuse to give even the smallest of kindnesses (e.g. neighborly needs: pots, pans, knives...)﴾ [107:4-7]

- Purity from being pleased with one’s actions. Allah (ﷻ) mentioned that Luqman said to his son:

﴿And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not each arrogant boaster. And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking,

and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the ass.﴾ [31:18]

- Purity from vanity. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:
“Whoever drags his clothing [on the ground] out of vanity, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Requital.” [al-Bukhari]
- Purity from the filth of pride. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:
“A person who has a seed’s worth of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise.” A man said, “O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) what if a person likes to wear nice clothing and shoes?” He replied, “Indeed Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Pride is that you reject the truth and look down upon others.”

[Muslim]

- Purity from the filth of envy. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:
“Do not hate each other, do not envy each other, and do not turn your backs upon each other; but rather be the slaves of Allah and be brothers. It is impermissible for a Muslim to abandon his brother for more than three days.” [Muslim]

As for physical purity, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! When you intend to offer the prayer, wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub [by passing wet hands over] your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles. If you are in a state of *Janaabah* [i.e. had a sexual discharge or intercourse] purify yourself (bathe your whole body). But if you are ill or on a journey or any of you comes from answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women [i.e. sexual intercourse] and you find no water, then seek clean earth and wipe therewith your faces and hands. Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to

purify you, and to complete His Favor on you that you may be thankful.﴾ [5:6]

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The [following] verse was revealed in description of the inhabitants of *Qubaa*’:

﴿In it are men who love to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who purify themselves.﴾ [9:108]

They purified [after relieving themselves] themselves with water, so this verse was revealed in their regards.” [Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

[28] The religion of Islam has a great inner strength. It enters the hearts and makes one obsessed with it. For this reason, many continue to accept Islam in spite of the weak financial and moral backing its callers receive. Even though its enemies spend vast amounts of money to distort and mar the image of Islam, people still accept Islam in droves. Rarely does a person enter Islam and then reject it after that. This inner strength also influenced some Orientalists who initially studied Islam in order to find dubious points therein. The beauty of Islam and its true principles which conform to the natural disposition of man and sound intellect changed their lives, and they later accepted Islam. Previous enemies to Islam now attest that it is the true Religion. *Gibb* said:

Well, then, if the Qur'an were of his own composition, other men could rival it. Let them produce ten verses like it. If they could not (and it is obvious that they could not), let them accept the Qur'an as an outstanding evidential miracle.

[29] Islam is a Religion of social support; it has obligated upon Muslims to attend to the needs of their fellow brothers, wherever they may be. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The believers in their love, mercy and their feeling for each other are like one body: if one part feels pains, all

the other parts feel pain by fever and sleeplessness.”
[Muslim]

Islam orders that Muslims strive to improve their conditions through offering charity, whether that charity be obligatory or voluntary. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” [al-Bukhari]

It orders that Muslims support their brothers in times of crises and agony. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The believers are like a solid structure, each one [brick] strengthens the other,” and then he clasped his hands and intertwined his fingers).” [al-Bukhari]

It orders that Muslims aid their brothers and assist them in times of war. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And if they seek your help in Religion, it is your duty to help them.﴾ [8:72]

It forbids that they be forsaken in their time of need. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No person forsakes defending his Muslim brother when his honor is being attacked, except that Allah will forsake him at a time when he needs it most. And no person comes to the aid of his Muslim brother when his honor is being attacked except that Allah will come to his aid at a time he needs it the most.” [Ahmad & Abu Dawood]

[30] The Religion of Islam came with a just and fair system of inheritance, one which distributes the wealth of the deceased amongst his heirs each according to their right, whether they be young or old, male or female, This division of wealth is one which all sound intellects will attest to. The wealth is distributed amongst the heirs of a deceased according to their lineage to the deceased and the benefit they might derive from it. No one has the right to distribute the inheritance the way he desires. One of

the benefits of this system is that it distributes resources, no matter how vast, by dividing them into smaller entities, thus making monopolization impossible. The Noble Qur'an clarifies the share which should be given to children parents, spouses, and kith and kin in Surah an-Nisaa in three verses: 11, 12, and ١٧٦. The Prophet (ﷺ) also said:

“Indeed Allah has given each person his due right. So let not one of you bequeath something to someone who has already been allotted a portion of the inheritance.”

[Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

[31] The religion of Islam has legislated the way one can bequeath a portion of his wealth. Every Muslim has the right to bequeath a portion of his wealth which they wish to be used after his death for a righteous cause in order that it be counted for him as a continuous charity. However, the religion has limited the maximum amount a person can bequeath to a third of his total wealth. *Aamir bin Sa'd* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) visited me while I was sick in Mecca. I said to him, ‘I have some wealth, may I bequeath all of it [in charity]?’ He replied, ‘No.’ I said, ‘Then half of it?’ He replied, ‘No.’ Then I said, ‘A third?’ He replied, ‘A third, and a third is much. If you leave your heirs rich it would be better for them than to leave them begging . Whatever you spend it will act as a charity for you, even a morsel of food which your hand feeds your wife. Perhaps Allah will raise your status and cause some people to benefit from you, and cause others to be harmed.” *[al-Bukhari]*

Islam has placed a condition by which one can bequeath, specifically, that he must not harm his other rightful heirs. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... after payment of legacies they may have bequeathed or debts, so that no loss is caused [to anyone]. This is a Commandment from Allah.﴾ [4:12]

[32] The Religion of Islam has introduced a system of criminal punishment which guarantees peace and security of society from crime. Murder is prevented, wealth and honor is protected, criminals are subdued, and peoples' rights are protected from being usurped. Crime is reduced and its impact decreased, for in Islam each crime has a fixed punishment which suits it. It sentences capital punishment for premeditated murder. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe! The law of equality in punishment is prescribed for you in case of murder.» [2:178]

The killer is not be beheaded if the guardians of the deceased choose to pardon him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«But if the killer is forgiven by the brother (or the relatives, etc.) of the killed against blood money, then adhering to it with fairness and payment of the blood money to the heir should be made in fairness.» [2:178]

The punishment of theft is severing the hand from the wrist. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Sever the hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All Powerful, All Wise.» [5:38]

If a thief knew that his hand would be severed if he stole, he would not steal. He would value his hand, and people's money would be safe from his evil.

The punishment for fornication is flogging for those who were never married. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred stripes.» [24:2]

A person is also be flogged if he falsely accuses another of fornication. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes.﴾ [24:4]

All punishments and castigations in Islam are derived from a general principle. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof.﴾ [42:40]

Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿And if you punish, then punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted.﴾ [16:126]

There are specific conditions and guidelines for the implementation of these castigations. Furthermore, the implementation of these castigations is not a determined matter such that they must be implemented; rather, one may pardon and forgive if the castigation relates to that category of rights which belong to humans. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah.﴾ [42:40]

The reason behind the implementation of these castigations is not to seek revenge, or to lash out with harshness. Rather, the goal behind the implementation of these castigations is to protect the rights of humans, to stabilize the security within society and to serve as a deterrent for those who think of doing something which would harm it. If the person who wants to kill knows that he will be killed as well, and the person who wants to steal knows that his hand will be cut off, and the fornicator and the one who falsely accuses others of this crime knows that he will be flogged, this would most certainly deter him from doing these crimes. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And there is (a saving of) life for you in *al-Qisas* (the Law of Equality in punishment), O men of understanding, that you may become of the pious.﴾ [2:179]

Some may say that the castigations legislated in Islam for certain crimes are too harsh. Everyone agrees that these actions

are crimes whose danger is apparent in society and that they must be dealt with and eradicated, and that those who commit them should be punished. Therefore, the only difference (in opinion) here concerns the type of punishment which should be mete out for these crimes. Each of us should ask himself whether the punishments legislated in Islam are more successful in eradicating crime and lessening it, or man-made laws, which only increase the rate of crime. Indeed an unhealthy body part must be amputated if it means the survival for the rest of the body.

[33] The religion of Islam has permitted all types of financial transactions, such as buying and selling, forming of companies, rent, trade and bartering in order to make matters pertaining to daily life easy for them. This of course, is permitted in accordance to specific guidelines set in *Shari'ah* such that no party is harmed by the transaction and individual rights remain preserved. Also, both sides should be happy with the agreement, and the product should be known amongst them as well as the relative conditions pertaining to it. Nothing is forbidden in Islam except if it ensues a harm or danger or one of the parties in the transaction stands to be harmed, such as interest, gambling, or a transaction in which the product or its conditions are unknown.

Although, everyone has the right to freely use his money in accordance to *Shari'ah*, a person may be debarred from using it if his actions would inflict harm to himself or others. The young, insane, incompetent¹⁷, and those in debt until they pay off their loans are among those who are debarred from using their wealth. In this, we can see a great wisdom and protection of rights which clearly accords to sound intellect.

¹⁷ Those who do not know how to partake in financial transactions and may be taken advantage of.

[34] Islam is a clear and unambiguous religion. There is no belief in Islam which is confusing; a person has the right to ask about all of this. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So ask of those who have knowledge of the Scripture [scholars] if you know not.﴾ [21:7]

Islam has sternly warned against hiding knowledge from others which Allah has revealed. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the People in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers.﴾ [2:159]

[35] Islam is a Religion of unity and cooperation which calls Muslims to stand together in unity so that they may achieve honor and pride. This is achieved through the following:

- Leaving aside personal wants, and desires which are stirred up by nationalistic and tribal feelings, and are considered factors that would lead to the weakness and disintegration of the Muslim nation.
- Purifying beliefs and acts of worship from things that taint them, such as associating partners with Allah and innovations in the Religion.
- Cooperation between Muslims in all affairs, whether political economical, social, etc... which lead to peace and security. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves.﴾ [3:103]

Islam prohibits that Muslims differ and divide into groups. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment.﴾ [3:105]

Furthermore, differing is not from the religion of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] have no concern in them in the least. Their affair is only with Allah, Who then will tell them what they used to do.﴾ [6:159]

The religion has clarified the detrimental results of differing and division; among them, the enemies of Islam would not fear the Muslims and would gain the upper hand, and the Muslims would fall to a low level. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength depart.﴾ [8:46]

[36] Some of the matters of the unseen world have been explained in Islam, as it has mentioned stories of previous nations. Many verses detail what happened between those nations and their Prophets and Messengers. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And indeed We sent Moses with Our *Ayaat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and a manifest authority, to Pharaoh and his chiefs but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was no right guide.﴾ [11:96]

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And (remember) when Jesus the son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you confirming the Torah before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad. But when he (Ahmad, i.e. Muhammad (ﷺ)) came to them with clear proofs, they said: ‘This is plain magic.’﴾ [61:6]

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And to *'Aad* (We sent) their brother *Hud*, He said, ‘O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. Certainly, you do nothing but invent (lies)!» [11:50]

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And to *Thamud* (We sent) their brother *Salih*, He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other god but Him. He brought you forth from the earth and settled you therein, then ask forgiveness of Him and turn to Him in repentance. Certainly, my Lord is Near (to all by His Knowledge), responsive.» [11:61]

Similarly, Allah narrated the stories of other prophets and messengers and what took place between them and their nations.

[37] The religion of Islam challenges all mankind to bring forth something similar to the Qur'an, the final Heavenly Book. This challenge is ongoing until the Day of Judgment. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Let them then produce a recital like unto it (the Qur'an) if they are indeed truthful.» [52:34]

Allah lessened this challenge by asking mankind to try to bring only a few chapters similar to the chapters of the Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Or they say, ‘He (Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)) forged it (the Qur'an).’ Say: ‘Bring you then ten forged chapters like unto it, and call whomsoever you can other than Allah (to your help), if you speak the truth!’» [11:13]

Allah lessened this challenge further and asked them to try to bring forth one chapter¹⁸ similar to it. Allah (ﷻ) says:

¹⁸ The smallest chapter in the Qur'an has only three verses, yet none in the history of mankind has brought something like it.

﴿And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (this Qur'an) to Our slave (Muhammad ﷺ) then produce a chapter of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides Allah, if you are indeed truthful.﴾ [2:23]

This challenge was made to all of creation, jinn and men. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: If mankind and jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could never produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another.﴾ [17:88]

[38] *Jihad* is legislated to protect the religion, individual, family, and country. It also commands that *jihad* be waged against those who seek to impede the spread of the religion of Allah, for it is a global call, not limited to a specific race. Therefore, everyone should be given a chance to know it and the goodness, justice and love it contains. *Jihad* is also waged in order to relieve oppression and to aid the oppressed. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors.﴾ [2:190]

Jihad in Islam is waged in order that Allah's Word be made supreme and that His religion may spread. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And fight them until there is no more disbelief and polytheism, and the religion will all be for Allah Alone [in the whole of the world].﴾ [8:39]

A person said to the Prophet (ﷺ):

“A person fights for war-booty, another fights for fame, and yet another fights to showoff. Which one is doing so for the sake of Allah?” The Prophet (ﷺ) answered: “Whoever fights in order to raise the Word of Allah and make it supreme, he is the one who does so for the sake of Allah” [al-Bukhari]

The goal of Jihad is not to achieve some worldly, personal, or satanic benefit, nor is it carried out to expand one's boundaries, show one's military strength, or revenge. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And be not like those who come out of their homes boastfully and to be seen of men.﴾ [8:47]

Islam is a religion which enjoins the good and forbids the evil. This safeguards the Muslim nation. For the tenets of the religion can never be upheld unless its followers adhere to its commandments and abstain from its prohibitions. It also seeks to rectify those who have diverged from the Straight Path, and deter them from doing sinful acts. In this manner, society is safeguarded from evil and decay. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The likes of those who stay within the limits set by Allah and those who trespass them is like a group of people who divided their places on a ship (before setting out to sea). Some of them were on the upper deck while others were on the lower deck. When those on the lower deck required water, they had to pass by those above them. So they said, ‘If we make a hole in our part, we will not have to bother those on top.’ If they (those on the upper deck) left them to do as they pleased, they would all be destroyed, and if they are stopped they would all be saved.” [al-Bukhari]

[39] The religion of Islam is universal and covers every aspect of life, such that it has legislated laws and regulations concerning transactions, warfare, marriage, economy, politics and acts of worship and so on. This builds a perfect society; even if mankind gathers together to produce something like it, they would never be able to do so. The more a society furthers itself from these laws and regulations, the more corrupt it becomes. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and

glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims).﴾ [16:89]

Islam has defined the relationship between a Muslim and his Lord, his society and surroundings, both living and nonliving. There is nothing in Islam which is rejected by the natural disposition of man or his sound intellect. A proof which points to this fact is the importance it has paid to ethics and specific issues which deal with daily life, such as the manners specific to answering the call of nature and what a Muslim should do before, during and after relieving himself. Abdurrahman b. Zaid said that someone said to Salman al-Faarisi,

“Your Prophet has taught you everything, even how to relieve yourself!?” Salman replied: **“Yes indeed. He forbade us from facing the direction of Mecca when defecating and urinating, and that we clean ourselves with our right hands, and that we use less than three stones when doing so, or that we clean ourselves with dung or bones.”**

[Muslim]

[40] The religion of Islam is a sign of the advent of the Day of Resurrection and end of this world. The Prophet (ﷺ) clarified that he was the last Prophet, and his commissioning as a Prophet was a sign of the nearness of the Final Hour. Anas (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“‘The Hour and I were raised like these two,’ and he joined his middle and index finger together.” *[Muslim]*

This is due to the fact that he is the last and final Messenger.

The Spiritual Aspect of Islam

Worship

Worship in Islam is a term which generally denotes obedience to the commands of Allah, whether those commands be related to speech, deeds, or beliefs. Creedal acts of worship are called the '**Articles of Faith**', explained in the following pages.

1. Belief in Allah

Belief in Allah entails that Allah is One and Unique in the following aspects:

[1] **Allah is One and Unique in His Lordship:** This means that one must attest that Allah exists, and that He is the Creator of this universe, its Owner and its Proprietor and the One Who disposes of all its affairs. He is the One Who causes all things in existence to occur; nothing comes into existence except if He wills it. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all that exists!﴾ [7:54]

Allah has clarified that He is the only Creator, and that it is impossible that there be another Creator with Him. He (ﷻ) says:

﴿No son (or offspring or children) did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him; (if there had been many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have tried to overcome others! Far removed is Allah from every imperfection!﴾ [23:91]

[2] **Allah is One and Unique in His Right to Worship:** This means that one must certainly attest that Allah is the only true god, Who deserves to be worshipped, and all acts must be dedicated to Him alone. One should not rely upon anyone besides Him, nor should a person supplicate to anyone besides Him. A person should only invoke Allah to relieve some harm or fulfill some need. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We did not send any Messenger before you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] but We inspired him [saying]: none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me (Alone and none else).﴾ [21:25]

[3] Allah is One and Unique in His Names and Attributes: This means that one must believe in the uniqueness of Allah's Names and Attributes, and that he is only attributed with the best and most lofty of Names and Attributes, and that He is far removed from every imperfection. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names.﴾ [7:180]

We believe and affirm with what Allah has described Himself in addition to what His Messenger (ﷺ) attributed to Him, all without drawing similarity or parallels between the attributes of Allah and those of His creatures, and without suspending, distorting, or denying the meaning of His names and attributes. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.﴾ [42:11]

2. Belief in the Angels

This is to believe in the existence of another life form called angels. No one knows their exact number except Allah Himself. They obey Him, fulfill His commands, and guard over the universe and the creatures that dwell within. They carry out specific orders of Allah, from administration, observation, guarding and protecting the universe, as well as its creatures, all according to Allah's Will and Order. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And by those Angels who arrange to do the Commands of their Lord.﴾ [79:5]

Allah (ﷻ) also says:

«**And those [angels] who distribute [provisions, rain, and other blessings] by [Allah's] Command.**» [51:4]

The angels were created from light. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The angels were created from light, the Jinn were created from a smokeless flame of fire, and Adam was created from what was described to you (in the Qur'an: black dry clay).” [Muslim]

The Angels are from the unseen world. Although they were created from light, they cannot be seen. Allah (ﷻ) has however given them the ability to change their appearance in order to be seen and witnessed. Allah informs us that the angel Gabriel (جبرائيل) came to Mary in the form of a human, a fact also mentioned in the Bible. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**She placed a screen [to screen herself] from them; then We sent to her a Spirit from us (Gabriel جبرائيل) and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects. She said: ‘Verily! I seek refuge with the Most Beneficent (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah.’ (The Angel) said: ‘I am only a Messenger from your Lord, [to announce] to you the gift of a righteous son.’**» [19:17]

The Prophet (ﷺ) saw Gabriel (جبرائيل) in the true form Allah created him. He had six hundred wings, and he had blocked the horizon due to his size.

The angels have wings; some have two wings, others have three, while others have more than that. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the [only] Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings, two or three and four. He increases in creation what He wills. Verily, Allah is Able to do all things.**» [35:1]

As for their other physical attributes, Allah has not informed us of them. Allah has however, specifically informed us of some of their task and roles.

The angels constantly worship Allah, obey Him, and praise Him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**They (i.e. the angels) glorify His Praises night and day, [and] they never slacken [to do so].**» [21:20]

Allah (ﷻ) created them to worship and obey Him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**The Messiah (Jesus ﷺ) will never be so proud to reject being a slave to Allah, nor [will] the angels who are near [to Allah].**» [4:172]

The angels act as emissaries between Allah and His messengers amongst mankind. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**Which the trustworthy Spirit (Gabriel) has brought down. Upon your heart [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] that you may be [one] of the warners. In a plain Arabic language.**» [26:193-195]

Allah created them to carry out different tasks with which He commands them:

«**They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded.**» [16:50]

The angels are not the children of Allah; but they must be respected and loved. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**And they say: ‘The Most Beneficent (Allah) has begotten a child [from the angels].’ Far removed is He from every imperfection! They (the angels), are but honored slaves. They speak not until He has spoken, and [then] they act on His Command.**» [21:26-27]

The angels are not partners, associates, or rivals with Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**Nor would He order you to take angels and Prophets for gods. Would He order you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allah's Will?**» [3:80]

Allah informs us of the names and tasks of some of the Angels. Gabriel (جبرائيل) was given the task of revelation. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Which the trustworthy Spirit (Gabriel) has brought down. Upon your heart [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] that you may be [one] of the Warners.» [26:193-4]

Michael (ميكائيل) has been assigned the task of rain and vegetation. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers and Gabriel and Michael – then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.» [2:96]

The Angel of Death is the Angel given the task of collecting peoples' souls at the time of death. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Say: ‘The Angel of Death who is set over you will take your souls, then you shall be brought back to your Lord.» [32:11]

Israafeel is the angel who was given the task to blow the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Then, when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no kinship among them that Day, nor will they ask of one another.» [23:101]

Malik is the Keeper of Hellfire. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And they will cry: ‘O *Malik*! Let your Lord make an end of us.’ He will say: ‘Verily, you shall abide forever.’» [43:77]

The *Zaabaaniyah* are the angels who are given the task of punishing the inhabitants of Hellfire. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Then, let him call upon his council [of helpers], We will call the guards of Hell [to deal with him]!» [96:17-8]

Every human has been assigned two angels; one who records his good deeds, and the other who records his sins. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿[Remember!] **That the two receivers** (Recording Angels) **receive, one sitting on the right and one on the left** [to note his or her actions]. **Not a word does he** [or she] **utter, but there is a watcher by him ready** [to record it].﴾ [50:17]

Ridhwaan is the Keeper of Paradise and there are other angels who are charged with protecting humans. There are many more, and each has been assigned a specific task. Some have been mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, while others have not, but we must believe in them all.

The Benefits of Belief in the Angels

Through belief in the angels, we may benefit in the following ways:

[1] We come to know the Magnificence of Allah (ﷻ), His ability, and His All-Encompassing Knowledge and Will, for indeed the magnificence of His creation is a proof of the magnificence of the Creator.

[2] When a Muslim feels that there are angels closely watching what he is saying and doing, and that everything he does is either for him or held against him, he is keen to perform righteous deeds and abstain from sins, whether he is alone or in public.

[3] One is saved from fables and superstitions held by those who have incorrect beliefs in regard to the Unseen world.

[4] One comes to know the Mercy which Allah shows to His righteous slaves.

3. Belief in Allah's Books

To believe in Allah's Books is to believe that Allah (ﷻ) revealed Heavenly Books to His Messengers to convey them to mankind. These Books, at the time of their revelation, contained nothing but the truth. In them was the Message of the Oneness of Allah (ﷻ): that there is no creator, administrator, or owner

except Him, that all worship should be directed to Him and no one else, and that to Him belongs all excellent Names and Attributes. He is nothing like His creation, and none can be compared to Him. Allah (ﷻ) says

«Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice.» [57:25]

A Muslim must believe in all the Heavenly Books and he must believe that they were originally from Allah (ﷻ). However, it is not lawful for him to abide by its laws, since these Books were revealed to specific nations during specific times.

[1] **The Scriptures of Abraham (ﷺ) and Moses:** The Qur'an has given a brief insight about the religious fundamentals found in these scriptures. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Or, has he not been informed of what is in the scriptures of Moses? And [of] Abraham who fulfilled (the commandments): That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another; And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; And that his striving shall soon be seen; Then shall be rewarded for it with the fullest reward; and that to your Lord is the goal.» [53:36-42]

[2] **The Torah:** The Torah is the Sacred Book which was revealed to Moses (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily, We did send down the Torah [to Moses], therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah's Will, judged the Jews. And the rabbis and the priests [too judged the Jews by the Torah after those Prophets] for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore, fear not men but fear Me [O Jews] and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.» [5:44]

The Qur'an has explained some of the teachings which were found in the **Torah**, and from them is a mention of some of the characteristics of the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate [in prayer], seeking Bounty from Allah and [His] Good Pleasure. The mark of them (i.e. of their Faith) is on their faces from the traces of [their] prostration. This is their description in the Torah (Torah).﴾ [48:29]**

Allah also mentioned in the Qur'an some of the religious rulings revealed in the **Torah**. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**And We ordained therein for them: 'Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal.' But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it shall be for him expiation. And whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are the wrongdoers.﴾ [5:45]**

[3] **The *Zaboor* (Psalms):** The *Zaboor* is the Scripture revealed to David (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**...and to David We gave the *Zaboor*.﴾ [4:163]**

[4] **The *Injeel* (Gospel):** The *Injeel* is the Sacred Book which was revealed to Jesus (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him. And We gave him the *Injeel*, in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Torah that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the Allah-fearing.﴾ [5:46]**

The Qur'an has explained some of what was found in the Torah and the *Injeel*; such as the prophecy of Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿...and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it [specially] for those who guard [against evil] and give *Zakah*, and those who believe in Our verses. Those who follow the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the *Injeel*, [which] enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes their burden and the shackles which were upon them; so those who believe in him and honor him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful.﴾ [7:156]

They also encourage that people fight *jihad* in Allah's cause in order to make His religion supreme. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for the price that theirs shall be the Paradise. They fight in Allah's Cause, so they kill (others) and are killed. It is a promise in truth which is binding on Him in the Torah and the *Injeel* and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded. That is the supreme success.﴾ [9:111]

[5] **The Noble Qur'an:** One must believe that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allah which Gabriel (ﷺ) brought to Muhammad (ﷺ) in clear Arabic language. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Which the trustworthy Spirit (Gabriel) has brought down. Upon your heart [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] that you may be [one] of the warners. In a plain Arabic language.﴾ [26:193-5]

The Qur'an is different than the Heavenly Books that preceded it, in the following ways:

a) The Qur'an is the last of the Heavenly Books, confirming the previous Books concerning the Message of His Oneness and the obligation to worship and obey Him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And We have sent down to you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] the Book (this Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and a witness over it).» [5:48]

b) All previous Books were abrogated by the Qur'an. Its teachings are divine, final, everlasting and suitable for all times and places. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as a religion.» [5:3]

c) The Qur'an was revealed to mankind at large; not to a specific nation, as were previously revealed Heavenly Books. Allah says:

«And We have not sent you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] except to all of mankind, as a giver of glad tidings and a warner, but most people know not.» [34:28]

Even if the other Books agree with the Qur'an in the fundamentals of the religion, they address a specific people. Due to this, its rulings and regulations are particular to them. It is attributed to Jesus (ﷺ) in the Bible that he himself said:

“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house (children) of Israel.” [Matthew 15:24]

d) Its recitation, memorization and teaching are regarded as acts of worship. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever recites one letter of the Qur'an, he will receive ten rewards. I do not mean that ‘Alif Laam Meem’ is one letter, rather, ‘Alif’ is a letter, ‘Laam’ is a letter, and ‘Meem’ is a letter.” [at-Tirmidhi]

e) The Qur'an includes all the legislations which are needed to reform society. In his book 'Towards understanding Islam', H.G. Dorman says about the Qur'an:

It (the Qur'an) is literal revelation of God, dictated to Muhammad (ﷺ) by Gabriel, perfect in every letter. It is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and to Muhammad (ﷺ), the Prophet of God. Its miraculous quality resides partly in its style, so perfect and lofty that neither man nor jinn could produce a single chapter to compare with its briefest chapter, and partly in its content of teachings prophecies about the future, and amazingly accurate information such as the unlettered Muhammad could never have gathered of his own accord.

f) It is a historical account explaining the series of religions which were revealed to the various prophets and messengers. It accounts for what transpired between them and their nation, from Adam to Muhammad, may Allah praise them all.

g) Allah has preserved the Qur'an from all distortions, adulterations, additions, or impairments. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Indeed it is We ourselves Who have sent down the Remembrance (the Qur'an) and surely, it is We Who shall guard it [from distortion].» [15:9]

h) As for the other Books, Allah did not promise to protect them, for they were revealed to a particular people in a particular time. For that reason, they were distorted. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Do you (faithful believers) covet that they will believe in your religion despite the fact that a party of them (Jewish rabbis) used to hear the Word of Allah (the Torah), then they used to change it knowingly after they understood it?» [2:75]

In regards to the distortion of the Christians in the Gospels, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And from those who call themselves Christians, We took their covenant, but they have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them. So We planted amongst them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection, and Allah will inform them of what they used to do. O people of the Scripture! Now has come to you Our Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) explaining to you much of that which you used to hide from the Scripture and passing over (i.e. leaving out without explaining) much. Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light and a plain Book (this Qur'an).﴾ [5:14-15]

Among the things that the Jews and Christians innovated in their religions, was the falsehood of attributing a son to Allah. Some Jews claimed that Ezra was the son of Allah, while the Christians claimed that the Messiah (Jesus) was the son of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says in this regard:

﴿And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: the Messiah is the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouths. They imitate the saying of the disbelievers of old. Allah's Curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the truth!﴾ [9:30]

Allah refuted their claims and clarified the correct belief one should hold, saying:

﴿Say [O Muhammad (ﷺ)]: 'He is Allah, One. Allah is the Self-Sufficient Master Whom all creatures need. He begets not, nor was He begotten; And there is none equal or comparable unto Him.'﴾ [112:1-4]

From this, it should be clear that the different versions of the Bible in circulation today are not the Words of Allah, nor the Words of Jesus (ﷺ). Rather, they are the Words of his followers and students. It includes his biography, admonitions and commands, but much distortion has been made to it in order

to serve specific purposes. Steve Allen, said in his book: 'On the Bible, Religion, & Morality':

“The number of errors [in the Bible]... amounts to about 6,000! It is absurd to try to make this factual reality conform to the popular impression that the Bible is totally error-free.”
19

The Benefits of Belief in Allah's Books

Through belief in the various Scriptures that Allah has informed us, we benefit in the following ways:

[1] One realizes the mercy and love Allah has for His slaves, since He revealed to them Books which guide them to the Path which leads to His Pleasure. He safeguarded man from confusion and from the evil of Satan.

[2] One realizes the great wisdom of Allah, since He gave each nation a set of laws that suited them during their times.

[3] To distinguish true believers from those who are not. It is incumbent upon one who believes in his own Book to believe in the other Heavenly Books as well.

[4] To increase the good deeds of the Believers; for the one who believes in his Book and the Books that came after his Book receive his reward twice. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Those to whom We gave the Scripture [i.e. the Torah and the Injeel, etc.] before it, - they believe in it (the Qur'an). And when it is recited to them, they say: 'We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed even before it we have been from those who submit themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims. These will be given their reward twice over, because they are patient, and repel

19 'On the Bible, Religion, & Morality' pg.52.

evil with good, and spend out of that which We have provided them.﴾ [28:52-4]

4. Belief in the Messengers

One must believe that Allah (ﷻ) chose the finest amongst mankind to be Messengers whom He sent to His creation with specific legislations: to worship and obey Allah and to establish His religion and His Oneness. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We did not send any Messenger before you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] but We inspired him [saying]: none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me (Alone and none else).﴾ [21:25]

He ordered His Messengers to convey the Message to people, so that they would not have any proof against Allah²⁰ after He sent them.

They are bearers of glad-tidings of the Pleasure of Allah and His Paradise, which is reserved for those who believe in them and their teachings. They are also sent as warners to their peoples, to warn them of the anger of Allah and His punishment which is reserved for those who disbelieve in them and their teachings.

﴿And We send not the Messengers but as givers of glad tidings and as warners. So whosoever believes and does righteous good deeds, upon such shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve. But those who reject Our verses, the torment will touch them for their disbelief.﴾ [6:48-9]

There are many Prophets and Messengers; no one knows their exact number except Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And, indeed We have sent Messengers before you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)]; of some of them We have related to you

²⁰ They will not be able to say, "Had Allah sent us messengers, we would have followed His verses and became of the believers."

their story, and of some We have not related to you their story.﴾ [40:78]

One must believe in all of them and that they were human; they were not supernatural beings. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We sent not before you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] but men to whom We inspired, so ask the people of the Reminder (Scriptures) if you do not know. And We did not create them (the Messengers) [with] bodies that ate not food, nor were they immortal.﴾ [21:8]

Allah (ﷻ) says about Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿Say [O Muhammad (ﷺ)]: ‘I am only a man like you. It has been inspired to me that your God is One God. So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.’﴾ [18:110]

And He (ﷻ) said about Jesus (ﷺ):

﴿The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother (Mary) was a believer. They both used to eat food (as any other human being, while Allah does not eat). Look how We make the *aayaat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) clear to them, yet look how they are deluded away (from the truth).﴾ [5:75]

They do not have any attributes resembling Allah's. They can neither extend benefit, nor cause harm. They have no control over the universe, nor can they do with it as they please. They cannot do anything which only Allah is capable of. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad (ﷺ)]: ‘I possess no power of benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills. If I had the knowledge of the Unseen, I should have secured for

myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me.﴾ [7:188]

They fulfilled the trust and fully conveyed the message of Allah. They are the most knowledgeable and most pious of creation. Allah protected them from lying and treachery. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And it was not for a Messenger to bring a sign except by Allah's Leave.﴾ [13:38]

If one believes in some while he disbelieves in others, he has committed an act of disbelief can no longer be considered a Muslim. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers saying, 'We believe in some but reject others,' and wish to adopt a way in between. They are in truth disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating torment.﴾ [4:150-1]

The Qur'an has mentioned the names of twenty-five prophets and messengers. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And that was Our Proof which We gave Abraham against his people. We raise whom We will in degrees. Certainly your Lord is All Wise, All Knowing. And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob, each of them We guided, and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good doers. Zachariah, and John and Jesus and Elias, each one of them was of the righteous. And Ishmael and Elijah, and Jonah and Lot, and each one of them We preferred above all of the creation.﴾ [6:83-6]

Allah says about Adam (ﷺ):

﴿Allah chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all of the creation.﴾ [3:33]

Allah says about *Hood* (عليه السلام):

﴿And to ‘Aad (We sent) their brother Hood. He said, ‘O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. Certainly, you do nothing but invent (lies)!﴾ [11:50]

Allah says about *Salih* (عليه السلام):

﴿And to Thamood (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other god but Him. He brought you forth from the earth and settled you therein, then ask forgiveness of Him and turn to Him in repentance. Certainly, my Lord is Near, Responsive.﴾ [11:61]

Allah says about *Shu‘aib* (عليه السلام):

﴿And to the Median [We sent] their brother Shu‘aib. He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other god but Him, and give not short measure or weight, I see you in prosperity; and verily I fear for you the torment of a Day encompassing.﴾ [11:84]

Allah says about Enoch (عليه السلام):

﴿And (remember) Ishmael, and Enoch and Isaiah, all were from among the patient.﴾ [21:85]

Muhammad (ﷺ) was the last and final Messenger; no Messenger will come after him until the Final Day. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets.﴾ [33:40]

The religion of Muhammad (ﷺ) abrogated the religions which preceded it. It is the complete and final religion of truth which is obligatory to be followed, and it will continue to be so until the Final Hour.

Allah calls some of the Messengers ‘*Ulul-‘Azm*’ (those of strong determination). They were the most determined of the Messengers in conveying the Message; they were patient and

steadfast. They were Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, may Allah praise them all and keep them safe from all evil. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And (remember) when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)], and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary.﴾ [33:7]

Who is Muhammad (ﷺ)?

His name is Muhammad *bin*²¹ Abdullah *bin* Abdul-Muttalib *bin* Haashim. His *Kunyah* is Abul-Qaasim (The father of Qaasim). He was from the Arab tribe of Quraish whose ancestry traces back to ‘Adnaan. ‘Adnaan was from the children of Ishmael (ﷻ), the Prophet of Allah and son of Abraham (ﷻ), the most beloved chosen servant of Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah chose the tribe of *Kinaanah* over other tribes from the children of Ishmael He chose the Quraish over other tribes of *Kinaanah*; He chose *Banu Haashim* over the other families of the *Quraish*; and He chose me from *Banu Haashim*.” [Muslim]

He was born in the year 571 C.E. in the honored city of Mecca. Mecca was the religious center of the Arabian Peninsula, as it housed the *Ka’bah*, built by Abraham and his son, Ishmael, may Allah praise them and keep them safe from all evil.

His whole life exemplified truth and trustworthiness. He never told a lie, acted treacherously, or deceived anyone. Even before he received revelation, he was known amongst his people as ‘The Trustworthy’, and they would entrust him with their belongings when they intended to travel. He was also known as ‘The Truthful’. He was of excellent character and manners. He

²¹ Bin *pl.* Banu: 'the son of..', "the children of .."

was eloquent in speech. He always wished well for others. Allah describes him, saying:

«**And verily, you are on an exalted standard of character.**» [68:4]

He received his first revelation from Allah at the age of forty, and he remained in Mecca thereafter for thirteen years calling to the worship of Allah alone. He then migrated to *Medina* and called its people to Islam, where they accepted it. There, Allah revealed the remaining legislations. He conquered Mecca eight years after his migration, and he died when he was sixty-three, after having received the entire Qur'an from Allah through divine revelation. All the legislations of the Religion were revealed, completed and perfected, and the majority of Arabs accepted Islam.

The Benefits of Belief in the Messengers.

Through belief in the various Messengers that Allah sent, we benefit in the following ways:

[1] One realizes the mercy and love Allah has for His slaves; since He sent to them Messengers who conveyed to them His religion. They in themselves were examples whom people emulated.

[2] To distinguish the believers who are truthful in their Faith from others; for it is incumbent upon one who believes in his own Messenger to believe in other Messengers who are mentioned in his Book.

[3] Those who believe in their Messengers and then believe in Muhammad (ﷺ) receive double reward.

5. Belief in the Last Day

One must believe that the life of this world will come to an end. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.**» [55:26]

When Allah wills this world to come to an end, Allah will order Angel Israafeel to blow the Trumpet. At that point, everything on Earth will perish. Then, He will order him to blow it again, and upon that, all people will rise from their graves in their bodies, all over the world, from the time of Adam (عليه السلام). Allah says:

﴿And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will collapse and die, except him whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time and behold, they will be standing, looking on (waiting).﴾ [39:68]

Belief in the Last Day constitutes belief in everything that Allah and His Messenger, may Allah praise him, has informed us about.

[1] **To believe in the life of the *Barzakh*:** The *Barzakh* denotes the time after one's death until the Last Day. In it, the believer will live a life of pleasure, while the disbelievers will be punished. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The Fire; they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon⁴¹, and on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the Angels): ‘Make Pharaoh’s people enter the severest torment!’﴾ [40:46]

[2] **To believe in Resurrection:** Allah will resurrect mankind, naked, barefooted, and uncircumcised. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The disbelievers claim that they will never be resurrected. Say: Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will be informed of what you did, and that is easy for Allah.﴾ [64:7]

Due to the fact that many do not believe that Allah will resurrect all of creation, the Qur'an affirms this fact by striking many examples. Of these examples are the following:

- Contemplating how Allah brings dead earth to life and sprouts therein all types of plants. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And you see the earth barren, but when We send down water on it, it is stirred [to life], it swells and puts forth every lovely kind [of growth]. That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and it is He Who gives life to the dead, and it is He Who is Able to do all things. And surely, the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it, and certainly, Allah will resurrect those who are in the graves.﴾ [22:5-7]

- Pondering over the creation of the heavens and earth which is indeed greater than the creation of humans. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation, is Able to give life to the dead? Yes, He surely is Able to do all things.﴾ [46:33]

- Reflecting on how a person wakes up after sleep, which is similar to resurrection after death. This is why sleep is called ‘the lesser death’. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those (souls) for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed. Verily, in this are signs for a people who think deeply﴾ [39:42]

- Pondering over his own creation. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And he (man) puts forth for Us a parable, and forgets his own creation. He says: ‘Who will give life to these bones when they have rotted away and became dust?’ Say: ‘He will give life to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation!’﴾ [36:78-9]

[3] To believe in the Gathering: Allah will gather all creation together and call them to account. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And [remember]] the Day We shall cause the mountains to pass away , and you will see the earth as a leveled plain, and we shall gather them all together so as to leave not one of them behind.﴾ [18:47]

[4] To believe that people will be brought before Allah in ranks: Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And they shall be brought before your Lord, standing in ranks: Now certainly you have come to Us as We created you at first. Nay, you thought that We had not appointed to you a time of the fulfillment of the promise.﴾ [18:48]

[5] To believe that one's limbs will bear witness. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Till, when they reach it (Hellfire), their hearing (ears) and their eyes, and their skins will testify against them as to what they used to do. And they will say to their skins, 'Why do you testify against us?' They will say: 'Allah has caused us to speak, He causes all things to speak: and He created you the first time, and to Him you are made to return.' And you have not been hiding yourselves (in the world), lest your ears, and your eyes, and your skins testify against you; but you thought that Allah knew not much of what you were doing.﴾ [41:20-2]

[6] To believe in the Questioning. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿But stop them; verily they are to be questioned. 'What is the matter with you? Why do you not help one another (as you used to do in the world)?' Nay, but that Day they shall surrender.﴾ [33:40]

[7] To believe in the *Siraat* (Bridge) over Hell, which everyone must pass over. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is with your Lord a Decree which must be accomplished.﴾ [19:71]

[8] **To believe in the weighing of deeds.** Allah will call people to account and reward those who did well with what they deserve, due to their righteous deeds, their belief, and adherence to their Messengers, and He will punish those who did evil. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account.﴾ [21:47]

[9] **To believe in the handing out of Scrolls and Books.** Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Then, as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand, He surely will receive an easy reckoning. And he will return to his family in joy! But whosoever is given his Record behind his back. He will invoke (his) destruction. And he shall enter a blazing Fire and made to taste its burning.﴾ [84:7-12]

[10] **To believe that people will be rewarded with Paradise or Hellfire in an everlasting and eternal life.** Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily those who disbelieve from among the people of the Book and the pagans will abide in the Fire of Hell. They are the worst of creatures. Verily, those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of creatures. Their reward with their Lord is the Paradise of Eden, underneath which rivers flow. They will abide therein forever. Allah will be pleased with them, and they with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord.﴾ [98:6-8]

[11] **To believe in the prophetic reservoir²², intercession, and all other things of which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) informed us.**

²² The pool which Allah granted the Prophet (ﷺ); whoever drinks from

The Benefits of Belief in the Last Day

Through belief in Last Day, we benefit in the following ways:

[1] It makes one prepare himself for that Day by performing good deeds, and competing therein, and abstaining from sinful acts and fearing His punishment.

[2] It comforts the believers; since they know if they forgo something in this world, Allah rewards them with something better in the Hereafter.

[3] To distinguish the believers who are truthful in their faith from those who are not.

6. Belief in Qadaa & Qadar

One must believe that Allah knew everything before it came into being, as well as what would occur afterwards. He then brought them into existence, all in accordance to His Knowledge and Decree. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We have created all things with Qadar.﴾ [54:49]

Everything which occurred in the past, which is occurring in the present and what will occur in the future is known to Allah before it came into existence. Allah then brought it into being, all in accordance to His Will and Decree. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A person is not a believer until he believes in the Divine Decree, its good and its evil consequences – until he knows that whatever happened to him would have never missed him, and what missed him would have never occurred.” [at-Tirmidhi]

it once, will never feel thirsty thereafter.

This belief does not contradict the fact that one must strive to attain things. To clarify this, if a person wants a child he must do certain things to achieve this goal, such as getting married. After he does all that is in his power, he may be granted what he wishes or not. The reason for this is that a person would realize that what he does to achieve his goal is not in fact the true cause behind it; rather it is the Will of Allah. These ‘means’ to fulfill our goals are also considered from the Divine Decree of Allah. The Prophet may Allah praise him, was asked:

‘O Messenger of Allah, do the verses and supplications we recite and the medicine we take to cure ourselves waive the Divine Decree of Allah (ﷻ)?’ [He replied,] ‘They are from the Divine Decree of Allah.’ [al-Haakim]

Hunger, thirst and feeling cold are from the Divine decree. One seeks to satisfy hunger through eating, thirst through drinking and coldness by keeping warm. They seek to fend themselves from what was written for them from hunger, thirst and coldness by what was written for them from eating, drinking, and seeking warmth. They seek to prevent one aspect of the Divine Decree with another.

The Benefits of Belief in the Divine Decree

Through the belief in the Divine Decree, one benefits in the following ways:

[1] Belief in the Divine Measure results in a clear conscience and peace of heart. No room is left for one to feel sad about what results or does not come to be. Uneasiness and unrest of the heart leads to many psychological disorders, such as depression and stress, all of which have a negative result on the body. Belief in this concept prevents and cures these sicknesses. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿No evil befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence; surely that is easy to Allah* So that you may not grieve for what has

escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you; and Allah does not love any arrogant boaster.﴾ [57:22-3]

[2] It encourages knowledge and exploration of what Allah created in this universe. Afflictions, such as disease, drive humans to seek a cure, and this is done by searching for the sources of medicine which Allah, the Most High, created in this universe.

[3] It eases the effects of calamities and eliminates the feeling of regret. If someone loses money in a business, this is considered a hardship. If a person is sorrowful after that, this would lead to two hardships: the hardship of the calamity and that of the feeling of remorse and sorrow. If one believes in the Divine Decree, he would be pleased with the results no matter what. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer, and in each one there is good. Be keen to do what benefits you and seek Allah's help, and do not be neglectful in doing so. And if any mishap befalls you, do not say, ‘If only I had only done such and such,’ but rather say, ‘This is from the Divine Decree of Allah, and whatever He Wills He does),’ for indeed, ‘if,’ opens the door for Satan’s works.” [Muslim]

[4] It increases one’s dependence upon Allah and removes fear of the creation. Ibn ‘Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said

“I was behind the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) one day and he (ﷺ) said to me: ‘O young boy, I will teach you some words: Guard Allah’s commandments and he will guard you. Guard Allah’s commandments, you will find Him in front of you (with His protection). And If you ask, then ask Allah, and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah. Know that if the whole world was to gather to help you, they would never be able to help you except with something which Allah has already

written for you. And if the whole world gathered to cause you some harm, they would not be able to harm you except with something which Allah has already written for you. The pens have been lifted, and the scrolls have dried'." [at-Tirmidhi]

Belief in the Divine Decree is not, as some mistakenly think, a call to put one's trust in Allah without striving or fulfilling the means, for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied to a person who asked him:

“Should I tie my camel and trust in Allah or leave my camel untied and trust in Allah?’ He said, ‘Tie it and trust in Allah'.” [at-Tirmidhi]

The Pillars of Islam

The types of worship which are performed physically and verbally are called the Pillars of Islam. They are the foundations upon which the Religion is built and by which a person is regarded a Muslim. These pillars are as follows:

- The two Testimonies of Faith, which is a verbal pillar of Islam.
- The second and fourth pillars of Islam are prayer and fasting, which are both physical pillars of Islam.
- The third is *Zakaah* (compulsory charity), which is a physical act of worship wherein one gives out the obligatory charity.
- The fifth pillar of Islam is Hajj (the Pilgrimage to Mecca), which combines, physical, verbal and calls upon one to expend from his wealth.

Islam does not call upon the Muslims to merely perform these acts of worship; rather, it wants of them to purify their souls. Allah (ﷻ) says regarding Prayer:

«Indeed the prayer prevents from licentiousness and [other] sins.» [29:45]

Allah (ﷻ) says about the Obligatory Charity (*Zakaah*):

«Take alms from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it.» [9:103]

Allah (ﷻ) says about fasting:

«O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become of the pious.» [2:183]

Fasting teaches and trains the individual self-restrain and discipline, and not to indulge in one's wants and desires. This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) meant when he said:

“Whoever does not refrain from false speech and deeds, Allah has no need for him to leave his food and drink.”
[*al-Bukhari*]

Allah (ﷻ) says about Hajj Pilgrimage:

«The Hajj is (in) the well-known months²³. So whosoever intends to perform Hajj, then he should not have sexual relations, nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the Hajj.» [2:197]

In Islam, worship plays a great role in developing and refining praiseworthy manners, as well as safeguarding the unity of Muslims. The Pillars of Islam are as follows:

The First Pillar: The Two Testimonies of Faith

These are the testimonies **that no one has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger**. This is a verbal pillar of Islam, but one must also follow it with belief and action. This is the key to enter Islam.

The Meaning of the First Testimony:

This is the phrase of ***Tawheed***²⁴. For this concept, Allah brought the creation into being, and for this concept He created Paradise and Hellfire. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And I have created neither the *Jinn* nor mankind except to worship Me.» [51:56]

This is the belief to which all Prophets and Messengers called their peoples from Adam to the last of them, Muhammad, may

²³ i.e. the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, i.e. two months and ten days.

²⁴ Tawheed: The concept of the Oneness of Allah.

Allah praise them and keep them safe from all evil. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And we have not sent before you any messenger except that We have revealed to him that there is no god that is worshipped in truth except Me, so worship and obey Me.﴾ [10:25]

The first testimony, **that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah**, includes the following meanings:

- Allah is the Creator of all that exists. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Such is Allah, your Lord! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Creator of all things. So worship and obey Him (Alone), and He is the Guardian over all things.﴾ [6:102]

- Allah is the Proprietor of all that exists, and the Disposer of all affairs²⁵. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all that exists!﴾ [7:54]

- Allah is the One Who deserves to be worshipped.²⁶ Allah says:

﴿Unquestionably, to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth. And those who invoke other than Allah do not [actually] follow [His] "partners." They follow not except assumption, and they only invent lies.﴾ [10:66]

- To Him belong the beautiful names and perfect attributes. Far removed is He from every imperfection.²⁷

²⁵ Points one and two are known as *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah*, or the Oneness of Allah. This is the belief that there is no Creator, Provider, Sustainer, and Owner except for Allah.

²⁶ This is concept is known as *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah*, or the Oneness of Allah in His worship.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And all the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do.﴾ [7:180]

The Conditions of the Testimony:

It is not enough to merely utter this testimony for it to be accepted by Allah. It is a key to the gates of Paradise, but in order for the key to work, it needs to have the right ridges. This Testimony must meet the following conditions for it to be accepted by Allah:

1. Knowledge: This comprises knowing that all things worshipped besides Allah are false. There is no god worshipped in truth except Allah, even if it be a prophet, a messenger or an angel. Allah is the only One Who deserves all types of worship, such as prayer, supplication, hope, sacrificial slaughtering, making oaths, etc.

Whoever assigns any act of worship to other than Allah while that person intends to worship or aggrandize the one who he assigned it to, has committed an act of disbelief, even if he uttered the two testimonies.

2. Certainty: The heart must be firmly certain of the meaning of the two testimonies. Certainty is the opposite of doubt, so there is no room for a person to doubt or hesitate in his belief. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not, and strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those are the truthful.﴾ [49:15]

²⁷ This concept is known as *Tawheed al-Asmaa' was-Sifaat*, that Allah has the Best Names and Attributes, and that there are none equal, comparable to, or like them.

3. Acceptance: One should accept the testimony fully, and not reject it.²⁸ Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Truly, when it was said to them, “There is no true deity worshipped except Allah,” they puff themselves up with pride (i.e. deny it).» [37:35]

4. Submission, obedience and acting upon all what the testimonies necessitate.²⁹ A person must do what Allah ordered and abstain from what He prohibited. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And whosoever submits his face to Allah, while he is a *Muhsin*³⁰ (doer of good) then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah return all matters for decision.» [37:35]

5. Truthfulness: One must be truthful in professing the testimonies.³¹ Allah says:

«They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts.» [48:11]

²⁸ It is not sufficient that a person knows what the *Shahaadah* means and believes it with certainty. Rather he must accept it by pronouncing it, and accepts to become a Muslim.

²⁹ It is not sufficient that a person knows what the *Shahaadah* means and believes it with certainty, accepts it by pronouncing it and accepts to become a Muslim, rather, he must act according to it.

³⁰ *Muhsin*: Literally, a person who does something well. Here it means one who does righteous deeds sincerely for Allah, according to the method the Prophet (ﷺ) taught us. Allah mentions both submission to Allah along with doing righteous deeds, and if a person does these he has grasped the *Shahaadah*.

³¹ Even though a person may be doing all these things on the outside, he might be hiding disbelief in his heart, like the Hypocrites.

6. Sincerity of worship: One must sincerely dedicate all acts of worship to Allah alone.³² Allah says:

﴿And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, following the religion purely and sincerely for Him, turning away from other religions.﴾ [98:5]

7. Love: One must love the testimonies and all that they necessitates. He must love Allah, His Messenger, and His righteous slaves. He must hate and show enmity towards all who show enmity to Allah and His Messenger. He must prefer what Allah and His Messenger love, even if it differs from his desires. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are rebellious and disobedient to Allah.﴾ [9:24]

These testimonies also necessitate that Allah is the only One Who has the right to legislate, whether it be in matters concerning worship or those concerning human relations, in both individual and public matters.

The act of making something prohibited or lawful is for Allah alone. His Messenger (ﷺ) merely explained and clarified Allah's commandments. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, refrain (from it).﴾ [59:7]

³² It may be that one fulfills all the previous conditions, but he directs worship to other than Allah at times, like supplicating to the dead, etc. He has not made his worship purely for Allah.

The Meaning of the second Testimony, that ‘Muhammad is His Messenger’

To bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah necessitates the following:

1. To believe that he is a Messenger, and that he is the best and last of the Messengers; no Messenger will come after him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets.» [33:40]

2. To believe that he is infallible in the teachings he conveyed from Allah (ﷻ). Allah, the Exalted, says:

«Nor does he speak of [his own] desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired.» [53:3-4]

As for the affairs of this world, he was a human, and he had his own opinions. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed I am only a human. It may be that a claimant comes to me with a dispute, and due to one of them being more coercive in speech than the other, I may rule in his favor. Whoever was ruled in his favor while he is wrong, [what he is receiving without right] is only a portion of the Hellfire, so let him take it or leave it.”

[Muslim]

3. To believe that he is a Messenger to all creation; to *Jinn* and to humans until the Final Hour. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And We have not sent you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] except to all of mankind, as a giver of glad tidings and a warner, but most people know not.» [34:28]

4. To obey the Prophet (ﷺ) in what he ordered, to believe in everything he said, and to refrain from what he forbade and warned against. Allah says:

﴿And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).﴾ [59:7]

5. To follow and adhere to the Prophet's (ﷺ) Sunnah, without innovating matters in it. Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad (ﷺ) to mankind]: If you truly love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ [3:31]

The Second Pillar: *Salaah* (Prayer)

It is obligatory upon you to establish the prayer [*Salaah*] for it is the backbone of the Religion; without it, one's Islam would not be complete. Striking an example between the Religion and a camel, the Prophet (ﷺ) said :

“As for the head of the Religion, it is Islam (the *Shahadataan*); as for its backbone, it is the *Salaah*, and as for the highest part of its hump, it is *Jihad*.”³³

[at-Tirmidhi]

Salaah is a term which denotes a group of words and actions which starts with *Takbeer* [saying ‘**Allahu Akbar**’, meaning: ‘Allah is the Greatest’] and ends with *tasleem* [saying ‘*As-Salaamu ‘alaykum wa Rahmatullaah*’].

A Muslim performs it out of obedience to Allah, magnifying and glorifying Him in it. Through it, one maintains a continual relationship with His Creator. Whenever a person becomes

³³ Jihad: To strive in the way of Allah so that His Word and Religion may be made supreme.

absorbed in the entertainments of this life and his faith weakens, he hears the call to prayer [*Adhaan*] which would admonish him. There are five prayers which must be performed in the day and night. Men must observe them in the *Masjid* in congregation, except for those who have a valid excuse. Through this, Muslims come to know one another, and the bonds of love and unity which hold them together are built, maintained and strengthened. They come to know of the condition of their fellow Muslims on a daily basis. If someone is not present and thought to be sick, they visit him, and if it seems that he is falling short in some of his obligations, they advise him. All social differences, such as class, race, and lineage are disregarded, for Muslims line up side by side in straight rows, all facing one direction [*Makkah* (Mecca)] all at the same time. All are rendered equal in regards to their subservience to Allah and standing before Him.

The Third Pillar: Obligatory Charity (*Zakaah*)

It is a certain percentage of money which a rich Muslim gives to the poor and needy to save them from the humility of begging. It is compulsory upon every Muslim who possesses the *Nisaab* (minimum amount upon which *Zakaah* is due). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and to establish the *Salaah* and give the *Zakaah*: and that is the correct and upright Religion.﴾ [98:5]

Whoever rejects its obligation would have fallen into disbelief, and transgressed against the weak, poor, and needy. It is not a tax levied by the Islamic State from its subjects, as the ignorant believe; for were it so, it would have been levied from Muslims and non-Muslims alike! Among the conditions of *Zakaah* is that a person be Muslim, and is not to be taken from non-Muslims.

The following are some of its conditions.

1. Possession of the minimum required amount: A person's wealth must reach the limit which has been set by the Religion of Islam.

2. The completion of one year. If the wealth is not in the person's possession for this period, there is no *Zakaah* due upon it.

Allah has specified those who are eligible to receive *Zakaah*. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**The *Sadaqaat* [*Zakaah*] is only for the *fuqaraa'* and *masaakeen* [the poor] and those employed to collect (the funds); and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam); and to free the captives; and for those in debt; and for Allah's Cause, and for the wayfarer [a traveler who is cut off from everything]; a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.**»
[9:60]

The amount which is to be paid is 2.5 % of the amount collected over a period of a year. Through it, Islam seeks to uproot poverty from the Muslim society and alleviate the dangers which result from it, like theft, murder, and acts of transgression against people's honor. It revitalizes the spirit of mutual dependence and brotherhood in the Muslim society by fulfilling the requirements of the poor and needy.

The difference between *Zakaah* and tax is that a Muslim pays it willfully and on his own accord; he is the one who supervises its payment. Furthermore, its name indicates its goal³⁴, which is purification of the soul of rich Muslims. It also cleanses a Muslim of greed, selfishness, base covetousness, and the love of this temporal world and drowning in its desires, all of which

³⁴ Zakah comes from the verb 'zakkah' which means to purify and cleanse.

make him forget his brothers from the poor and needy. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.﴾ [59:9]

It also purifies the poor from hatred and jealousy which they may have against the rich. They see them giving from their wealth as Allah has ordered, and continuously caring for them, by giving them money and treating them well.

Islam sternly warns those who refuse to pay *Zakaah*. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And let not those who covetously withhold of that which Allah has bestowed on them of His Bounty [Wealth] think that it is good for them (and so they do not pay the obligatory *Zakaah*). Nay, it will be worse for them; the things which they covetously withheld shall be tied to their necks like a collar on the Day of Resurrection.﴾ [3:180]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If any owner of gold or silver does not pay what is due from him, when the Day of Resurrection comes, plates of fire will be beaten out for him. These will then be heated in the fire of Hell and his sides, his forehead and his back will be cauterized with them. Whenever these cool down, (the process is) repeated for a day the extent of which will be fifty thousand years, until judgment is pronounced upon the slaves, and he sees whether his path is to take him to Paradise or to Hell.” [Muslim]

The Fourth Pillar: The Fast of Ramadan

A Muslim must fast one month in the year, which is the month of Ramadan. From the first break of dawn until the sun sets, Muslims must abstain from anything that breaks the fast, whether it be food, drink, or sexual intercourse. Fasting is not an

act of worship introduced by Islam; rather it was an obligation legislated in the previous religions as well. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.﴾ [2:183]

The objective of fasting is not that one merely abstains from those material and physical things which break one's fast. Rather, one must also refrain from those intangible things which reduce the reward of one's fast, such as lying, backbiting, tale-bearing, cheating, deception, false talk, and other offensive behavior. He should keep in mind that it is obligatory upon him to abstain from these offensive acts outside of Ramadan, but more so in this month, due to the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“Whoever does not refrain from false speech and deeds, Allah had no need for him to leave his food and drink.”
[*al-Bukhari*]

The Fasting is a struggle between one's soul and its cravings and desires. It has many social benefits which the Prophet (ﷺ) explained in his saying:

“All the actions of the children of Adam are for him except fasting, for it is for Me and I will reward for it. Fasting is a shield; When one of you is fasting, he should not speak evil, nor should he yell and shout, and if someone were to curse or fight him, let him say, ‘Indeed I am a fasting person.’ By Him in Whose Hands is the soul of Muhammad, the smell which issues from the mouth of a fasting person is more dearer to Allah than the fragrance of musk. One who fasts will have two occasions of joy: upon breaking his fast and when he meets his Lord.”

[*al-Bukhari and Muslim*]

Through fasting, one realizes how his needy brothers feel who do not find sufficient food, clothing, and shelter, and this would

entice him to fulfill his rights and ask about their conditions and what they need.

The Fifth Pillar: Hajj

Hajj is the pilgrimage one makes to the Sacred House of Allah (the *Ka'bah*) in order to perform certain rites at specific places at specific times. This pillar of Islam is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who is sane and has reached the age of puberty once in a lifetime, if they have the physical and financial capability.

If a person has an incurable disease which prevents him from performing Hajj but has enough money, he must deputize someone to perform Hajj for him. If a person does not have more money than what he needs to fulfill his daily requirements or those whom he supports, Hajj is not an obligation upon him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And the performing of Hajj to the House [Kaaba] is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who have the ability; and whoever disbelieves, then Allah stands not in need of any of the ‘aalameen [Mankind, Jinns and all that exists].﴾ [3:97]

Hajj is the largest Islamic gathering. Muslims from all over the world come together at one place and one time; they all call upon the same *Lord*, wear the same clothes, perform the same rituals, and recite the same call:

Lab'baik al'laahum'ma lab'baik, lab'baika laa shareeka laka lab'baik. In'nal hamda wun'ni-mata laka wal-mulk laa shareeka lak.

Meaning:

Here am I, O, Allah; here am I. There is no partner with You. Here am I. Surely, all praise and graces are Yours, and so is the dominion! There is no partner with You.

No difference is made between rich and poor, noble and ignoble, white and black, Arab and non-Arab; all are the same in front of Allah. There is no difference between them except in piety (*taqwaa*). The Hajj is an event which emphasizes the brotherhood of all Muslims and the unity of their hopes and feelings.

The Political Aspect of Islam

Islamic legislation has introduced basic principles and general rules in political matters which act as the basis upon which the Islamic State is built. The ruler of the Muslim State executes and implements the commands of Allah (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Do they then seek the judgment of (the days of) Ignorance? And who is better in judgment than Allah for a people who have firm Faith.» [5:50]

The ruler of the Islamic country is in fact a deputy over the *Ummah*, which obliges him to implement the following:

[1] To do everything in his ability to implement the legislations and laws of Allah, and to provide honest, honorable ways of living for the nation, to safeguard the Religion, security, lives, and wealth. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No slave of Allah is made to look after some affairs of the Muslims and fails to be true and sincere in it, except that he will not smell the scent of the Paradise.”

[*al-Bukhari*]

The ruler of the Islamic State must have the necessary characteristics, as described by *Umar b. al-Khattab* (رضي الله عنه) when he said to his Companions: **“Show me a man whom I can assign to take care of certain affairs of the Muslims which are of concern to me.”** They replied: **“Abdur-Rahman ibn ‘Auf.”** He said: **“He is weak.”** They mentioned another man and he said, **“I have no need of him.”** They then asked, **“What type of person do you want?”** He said: **“I want a man who, if he is their leader, he behaves as if he was one of them, and if he is not their leader, he appears as if he were.”** They said: **“No one else is more suitable than Ar-Rabee‘ah ibn ul-Haarith.”** *‘Umar* said: **“You have spoken the truth,”** and he appointed him.

2. The ruler must not appoint anyone over the Muslims who is not fit for the post or trust. He should not favor a friend or a relative over a worthy candidate for a certain post. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No slave is given responsibility over some people and dies in a state in which he is treacherous to them, except that Allah forbids him from Paradise.” [Muslim]

The aforementioned rules and principles are characterized by the following:

* They are divine, ordained by Allah and in their light all are considered equal...the ruler and the ruled, the rich and the poor, the noble and ignoble, the black and white - no one, no matter how high-ranking he is, is allowed to violate them or pass laws that contradict them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error.﴾ [33:36]

* All are required to abide, respect, and implement these rules and principles; both the ruler and the ruled. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger, to judge between them, is that they say: ‘We hear and we obey.’ And such are the successful ones (who will live forever in Paradise).﴾ [24:51]

In Islam, no man has absolute power; including the ruler for his powers are restricted by the limits set by the Islamic legislation; if he opposes them, people must disobey him and follow the truth. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It is obligatory upon a Muslim to listen and obey (the authority) in those things which he likes or does not, except if he is commanded to do something sinful. If he is

commanded to do a sinful act, then do not hear or obey.”
[*al-Bukhari*]

* Mutual consultation...the political system in Islam is built upon this. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And those who answer the Call of their Lord, and establish the Prayer, and who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them.﴾ [42:38]

Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs.﴾ [3:159]

In the first verse, Allah associates mutual consultation with prayers, which is the backbone of Islam. This indicates the importance of mutual consultation in Islam in all matters that concern the *Ummah* (nation). The people of knowledge should be consulted in these matters. At the end of the first ayah, Allah (ﷻ) praises the Believers in general because they mutually consult one another in all their matters.

In the second ayah, Allah (ﷻ) orders His Messenger, who was the Head of State, to mutually consult his Companions in matters that are of common interest to the *Ummah* (nation) if no apparent ruling was revealed concerning it. There is no mutual consultation in matters which have a ruling in *Shari'ah*. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"No people mutually consult, except they would be guided to the best matter. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) then recited:

﴿and who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation.﴾"
[*al-Adab al-Mufrad*]

Scholars have stated the obligation for the ruler to consult the people in matters relating to their interests. If he neglects their consultation, the people are required to demand it in order to say their word and give their opinion. This is based on the above mentioned verses, and because the Religion of Islam considers the ruler a deputy who is responsible to perform what was delegated to him. Thus the people are required to monitor the ruler's implementation of the Law. Islam gives all people the freedom to voice their opinion and criticize in the manner they deem appropriate, in accordance to the principles set by the Religion. They should not do so in a manner which causes disruption. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed the best *Jihad* is to utter a word of justice before a tyrannical ruler” [Abu Dawood & ibn Majaah]

Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam, addressed the people saying:

“O people! I have been appointed as your ruler though I am not the best among you. So if you find me upon the truth, help me. But if you find me in the wrong, correct me. Obey me so long as I obey Allah in conducting your affairs. However, if I disobey Him I have no claim to your obedience.”

‘Umar ibn ul-Khattab, the second Caliph, stood on the pulpit one day and addressed people saying: **“O people! If you find that I have fallen into corruption... then straighten me.”** A Bedouin rose from amongst the people and said: **“By Allah! If we find you crooked, we will straighten it with our swords,”** yet *‘Umar* did not get angry or harbor malice towards him. He only raised his hands towards the heaven and said: **“Praise be to Allah Who has made among our nation a person who is able to correct the crookedness of *‘Umar*.”**

The ruler is even called to account and questioned. Once, *‘Umar* addressed people while having a two-piece dress on. When he said: **“O people! Listen and obey,”** a man stood up and said: **“We will not listen nor obey! *‘Umar* (ﷺ) asked: “And why is**

that?” The man answered: **“Because you have a two-piece dress while we only have a single piece one** (he had allocated one dress for each Muslim).” *‘Umar* at once called out in his loudest voice: **“*Abdullah ibn ‘Umar* (his son)! Tell them!”** *Abdullah* said: **“It is my dress which I gave to him.”** The man then said: **“Now we will listen and obey.”**

Thus Islam preserves the rights and freedoms of both the society and the individual. It safeguards the sources of legislation from the whims and desires of legislators, since they shape their legislations with personal or regional needs and circumstances. The Islamic legislation does not discuss other minute details of government. This aims to leave the door open for Muslims to lay down proper rules and regulations that suit their specific conditions and serve their best interest in any specific place and time, provided such rules and regulations do not contradict the principles and fundamentals of Islam.

The Economic Aspect of Islam

Wealth is the vigor and basis upon which life is maintained. The Islamic *Shari'ah* aims through it to establish a balanced society, wherein social justice is upheld and one can live an honorable life. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world.﴾ [18:46]

Since Islam considers money one of the indispensable necessities without which individual nor society can exist, it has ordained that *Zakaah* be taken (2.5%) from the capital of the rich, if the necessary amount from which it is taken is in that person's possession for a full lunar year. This money is to be distributed amongst the poor. It is a due right of the poor, and it is forbidden to withhold it from them.

This does not mean that Islam abolishes individual ownership and private business; rather it sanctions and respects them. There are many explicit texts which prohibit transgression against wealth and property of others. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And eat up not one another's property unjustly.﴾ [2:188]

Islam has enacted laws and regulations the implementation of which guarantees the achievement of its goal... to provide an honorable life for each individual in the Islamic society. Some of the regulations are:

[1] Islam has forbidden interest, for it does not allow people to exploit others and devour their wealth wrongfully. Islam has made wealth and property inviolable. Due to the fact that interest leads people to forsake acts of kindness and leads to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from usury (from now onward), if you are (really) believers. And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. But

if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly (by asking more than your capital sums) **and you shall not be dealt with unjustly** (by receiving less than your capital sums).» [2:278-9]

[2] The Religion of Islam encourages people to give loans. It also encourages that one extend the period (of repayment) if one is having difficulty repaying a loan. One should not be harsh to that individual if he intends on repaying his debt. As for those who have the means to pay the debt off, but choose not to, a different course of action should be taken. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And if the debtor is in a hard time (has no money), then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay.» [2:280]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever loans money to a person in difficulty, he will receive the reward of charity for each day he gives them. And whoever extends the time period for the debtor who has difficulty returning a loan will receive the reward of charity for each day he does so.”

[Ibn Maajah]

[3] Islam encourages that the loan be pardoned altogether if it is difficult for the debtor to repay it. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And if the debtor is in a hard time (has no money), then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay, but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know.» [2:280]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever wishes that Allah save him from the difficulties of the Day of Requital let him extend the time period to a debtor or free him of his loan.” *[Muslim]*

[4] Hoarding and monopolizing of any type of commodity is forbidden, because the trader takes into his possession products which the people need without selling them until the supply

decreases, and then he sells them for whatever price he pleases. This incurs much harm, both to the individual and the society, the rich and the poor. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever hoards [commodities] would sin...” [Muslim]

Abu Yusuf, the student of *Imam Abu Haneefah*, may Allah have mercy on him, said:

“Anything that is hoarded and proves harmful to the public, it is considered of the prohibited type of monopoly, even if (the thing hoarded is) gold or silver. Whoever hoards (something the public is in need of) would have certainly misused what he owns. The reason monopoly is prohibited is to safeguard people from harm, for indeed, people have many different needs, and monopolizing therein would incur hardship upon people.”

A ruler may force one who hoards a commodity to sell it at a reasonable profit which is neither detrimental to the seller or buyer. If the monopolist refuses to sell at that profit, the ruler may take possession of the hoarded commodity and sell it at a reasonable price in order to prevent those who may be thinking of exploiting the people by monopolizing goods they are in need of.

[5] It has prohibited taxes that are taken from a trader to allow them to sell their goods or to import them into the country. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“One who collects the tax imposed on traders, will not enter Paradise.”

[Ahmad & Abu Dawood]

This tax is considered taking money unlawfully and giving it to those who are not entitled to it. All those who contribute to this tax, including tax collectors, clerks, witnesses and receivers come under the Prophet’s saying:

“No flesh that grows from unlawful things shall be admitted into Paradise; Hellfire shall have the best claim to them.” [at-Tirmidhi]

[6] Islam has forbidden hoarding wealth, and not expending from it the due right that belongs to Allah; both the individual as well as society would stand to benefit from this. Wealth should be circulated in society to stimulate the economy, and with this all individuals within society would stand to benefit. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment.﴾ [9:34]

As Islam respects individual ownership, it imposes rights and duties therein. Among these are obligations which concern and relate to the owner himself, such that he must take care of himself and his dependants; relatives and those who he must upkeep. There are other rights which concern the individuals in society, such that they must pay *Zakaah*, and give out charity, and help others. Other obligations concern the society at large, such that they must expend to build schools, hospitals, orphanages, mosques, and other facilities which would benefit society. What is sought by this is that resources are not amassed in the hands of a few within society.

[7] It has been forbidden to give less in measure and weight, for it is a type of theft, treachery and deception. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Woe to those who give less in measure and weight. * Those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, demand full measure. * And when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than due.﴾

[83:1-3]

[8] It has prohibited domination of public domain, such as water and public pastures, which do not belong to anyone; and has

also prohibited preventing people from benefiting from it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“There are three persons whom Allah will not speak to on the Day of Requitul nor look at... a person (seller) who falsely swears that he bought a product for a higher price than which [the buyer] bought it, a person who swears to a false oath after [the sacred time of] ‘Asr (late afternoon) so as to usurp the money of a Muslim, and a man who refuses to give excess water. On that day, Allah will say to him: ‘Today I withhold from you my Grace as you withheld what was in excess of your needs, though you are not its creator.” [*al-Bukhari*]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“All Muslims have equal shares in three things: pasture, water, and fire.” [*Ahmad*]

[9] The Religion of Islam brought about a just system of inheritance through which wealth is distributed amongst a man's rightful heirs; whether they are young, old, male or female. No one has the right to distribute the inheritance in any other way. One of the benefits of this system is that it divides the estates no matter how large they may be into small shares, thus making it impossible for the money to settle with a certain group. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah has given each person his due right. So let not one of you bequeath something to someone who is already allotted a portion of the inheritance.”

[*Abu Dawood*]

[10] Islam has legislated endowments, which are of two types:

a) Private endowments limited to the family and children of the endower; in order to safeguard them from poverty and begging. The condition of its validity is that the endowment should serve charitable causes after the endower's progeny cease.

b) Public charitable endowments which are used to maintain charitable causes; such as building hospitals, schools, streets, public libraries, Mosques, social welfare homes for orphans, foundlings, and the elderly, and all that serve public interest.

[11] The Religion of Islam has legislated a system of bequeathal; therefore, every Muslim has the right to bequeath a portion of his money to be used after his death for righteous purposes. The Religion has limited this portion, to a third so that his heirs would not be harmed. *Aamir bin Sa'd* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) would visit me while I was sick in *Makkah* (Mecca). I said to him, ‘I have some wealth, may I bequeath all of it [in charity]?’ He replied, ‘No.’ I said, ‘Then half of it?’ He replied, ‘No.’ Then I said, ‘A third?’ He replied, ‘A third is much. If you leave your heirs rich, it would be better than to leave them relying upon others begging them [for money]. Whatever you spend, it will act as a charity for you, even a morsel of food which your hand feeds your wife. Perhaps Allah will raise your status and cause some people to benefit from you, and cause others to be harmed.” [*al-Bukhari*]

[12]. Islam has forbidden all that falls under the words of Allah:

﴿O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves unjustly.﴾ [4:29]

This includes:

a) Usurpation of anything without right, for it involves wronging others and spreading corruption in society. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever usurps a Muslim’s right through a false oath, Allah makes the Hellfire obligatory upon him and Paradise forbidden. A man asked, ‘Even if it were something negligible O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?’ He replied, ‘Even if it were a twig of an ‘*Arak Tree*’.” [*Muslim*]

b) Theft. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The fornicator who fornicates is not a true believer so long as he commits it, no thief who steals is a true believer as long as he commits theft, and no drunkard who drinks wine is a true believer as long as he drinks it.” [Muslim]

For it includes taking people's wealth without right. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Sever the hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All Powerful, All Wise.﴾ [5:38]

In order for a man's hand to be severed as a castigatory punishment, the following conditions have to be met:

i. The wealth must have been in the custody and protection of the owner.

ii. The motive behind the theft must not have been the need for food, drink, or clothing. If this were the motive, the hand would not be severed. This is taken from the judgment of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) in the year of the *Ramaadah*.

iii. The amount stolen must meet the minimum required amount set for the implementation of this punishment.

Some of the scholars have stated that the repentance of the thief is not accepted until he returns what he has stolen to its owner. If he has no wealth, the owner of the wealth is asked to pardon him. Furthermore, if the owner pardons the thief before the case reaches the court, then the castigatory punishment is dropped.

c) Deceit and cheating. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever fights us is not from us, and whoever deceives us is not from us.” [Muslim]

d) Bribery. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And eat up not one another's property unjustly, nor give bribery to the rulers that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully.﴾ [2:188]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“May Allah curse the one who gives a bribe and the one who takes it in matters of judicial rulings.” [at-Tirmidhi]

Allah cursed the one who gives a bribe because he helps to spread evil in society; if he had not offered the bribe there would never have been any bribery. Allah cursed the one who accepts the bribe because he takes what is not rightfully his, and breaches the trust he was given; for he takes a price for a duty which he was designated to do in the first place.

e) It prohibited that a person sell something to a customer after his brother is about to strike a deal with him, except if he allows him to do so. This is because it stirs enmity and hatred between individuals in society. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Let not any person sell something if his brother [seller] is about to strike a deal, and let not any person propose to a women for the sake of marriage whom his brother has already proposed, except if he gave him permission.” [Muslim]

The Social Aspect of Islam

Islam has introduced social laws which set rights, and duties of every individual to ensure stability in society. Some of these rights are specific while others are general. Of the specific rights are:

Rights Owed to the Ruler

[1] Muslims must obey the ruler as long as he does not order them to do something forbidden in Islam. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad (ﷺ)), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority.﴾ [4:59]

[2] They must give sincere advice to the ruler, in a good and kind manner, by guiding him and his people to beneficial things, and to remind him of the needs of his subjects. Allah (ﷻ) instructed Moses and his brother Aaron upon sending them to Pharaoh to preach the true Religion to him:

﴿And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear (Allah).﴾ [20:44]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“‘The Religion is sincerity.’ We said ‘To whom?’ He said ‘To Allah, and His Book, and His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk.’ [Muslim]

[3] To support him in times of adversity and crises and not to revolt against him or forsake him, even if one was from a group who does not pledge allegiance to him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever comes to you while you are all united under a single leader and wishes to disrupt the unity and solidarity (of the Muslims), kill him.” [Muslim]

Rights Owed to the Ruled

These rights fall under five general fundamentals:

[1] Justice. This is achieved by giving everyone their due right. A ruler is required to be just, such that he protects others' rights, performs his duties, distributes responsibilities, and implements rules and decisions. All should stand as equals before him... no individual or group should be favored above others. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed the most beloved person to Allah and the closest one to be seated to Him on the Day of Requitul will be a just ruler. And indeed the most detestable person on the Day of Requitul and the most severe of them in punishment will be a tyrannical ruler.” [at-Tirmidhi]

[2] He must not oppress, deceive, or behave treacherously towards the masses. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No slave is given responsibility over some people and dies in a state in which he is treacherous to them, except that Allah forbids him from Paradise.” [Muslim]

[3] He must consult them regarding all affairs pertaining to their political, social and economic interests³⁵. He must allow them to voice their views, and he must accept such views if they prove to be in the best interest of the public. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh hearted, they would have broken away from you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs.﴾ [3:159]

³⁵ Consultation is limited to those matters for which there is no text from the Qur'an or Sunnah.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) encamped behind the wells before the Battle of Badr, so one of his Companions (*Al-Hubab ibn al-Mundhir*) asked him: **“Has Allah inspired you to choose this spot, or is it strategy of war?”** The Prophet replied: **“It is the strategy of war.”** Upon that, *Al-Hubab* said to the Prophet: **“Let us go and encamp after the wells in order to prevent the enemy from them (from drinking).”** So the Prophet (ﷺ) took his advice.

[4] His laws and constitution should be in accordance to Islamic Law. There is no room for him to judge according to his imperfect whims or desires. *‘Umar ibn ul-Khattaab*, the second Caliph of Islam, said to *Abu Maryam as-Salooli* who killed his brother, *Zaid ibn ul-Khattaab*: **“By Allah, I will not like you until the earth likes blood!”** He replied, **“Will this [hatred] deprive me of my rights?”** *‘Umar* said, **“No.”** He then said: **“Then there is no harm, for only women are displeased if they are not liked.”**

[5] He should not withdraw himself from the masses or lock his doors before them, nor should he belittle them or assign mediators between him and the public; who allow some people to enter and prevent others. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever is given responsibility of some matter of the Muslims but withdraws himself while they are in dire need and poverty, Allah will withdraw Himself from him while he is in dire need and poverty on the Day of Requital.” [*Abu Dawood*]

[6] He should be merciful to his subjects and not burden them with unbearable tasks or restrict their way of living. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“O Allah, whoever takes command of something of my nation and makes things hard for them, then make things hard for him, and whoever takes command of something

of my *Ummah* (Nation) and is gentle with them, then be gentle with him.” [Muslim]

‘Umar ibn ul-Khattaab explained the greatness of this matter in his words:

“By Allah, if a mule were to fall in Iraq, I would fear that Allah would ask me why I did not level the road for it.”

The Muslim ruler must be as *al-Hasan al-Basri*, may Allah have mercy upon him, described in a letter which he sent to *‘Umar ibn Abdul-Azeez*, in which he said:

“O Leader of the Faithful! Know that Allah has made the just ruler as one who straightens the crooked, one who restrains the oppressors, one who reforms the corrupt, one who strengthens and brings justice to the weak, and one who brings refuge to the afflicted.

O Leader of the Faithful! A just ruler is like a kind shepherd who looks for the best pastures for his flock and steers them away from areas of danger and wild animals, and protects them from harms.

O Leader of the Faithful! A just ruler is like a caring father who toils for the sake of his children, educates them as they grow up, and earns bread for them while he is still alive, and leaves for them (wealth) after his death.

O Leader of the Faithful! A just ruler is like an affectionate mother who has loving care for her son. She bears him with hardship, and delivers him with hardship. She cares for him while he is a little child, staying awake at night when he does and sleeps when he does. She feeds him at times, and weans him at others, and she feels happy about his good health and worries when he complains.

O Leader of the Faithful! A just ruler is the guardian of orphans and sponsor of the needy, he cares for the young and provides for the old.

O Leader of the Faithful! A just ruler is like a heart within the ribs. When the heart is healthy the ribs become healthy, but when it is sick they grow unhealthy.

O Leader of the Faithful! A just ruler is the one who listens to the Words of Allah and makes them listen to it, he is the one who seeks the reward of Allah, and makes his subjects seek His reward. He is the one who submits to the will of Allah and makes his subject submit to Him. O Leader of the Faithful, do not misuse what Allah has bestowed upon you, like a slave who his master entrusted him with his wealth and family, and he squandered the wealth and made his children homeless.

O Leader of the Faithful, know that Allah has prescribed certain castigatory punishments to deter his slaves from doing evil...what if the one who is charged with this duty does a sin that necessitates this? Castigations would safeguard people's lives... what if the one who is charged with this duty commits murder?

O Leader of the Faithful be mindful of death, and what will take place thereafter, and the little number of helpers; so gather whatever provisions you can in order to prepare for it and the horrors that follow it.

O Leader of the Faithful, know that you have a different home unlike your present home. In it your sleep will last long, and your friends will part with you, and leave you all by yourself. Therefore, take those provisions which may accompany you.

﴿That Day shall a man flee from his brother. * And from his mother and his father, * And from his wife and his children.﴾ [80:34-6]

O Leader of the Faithful, remember the words of Allah:

﴿When the contents of the graves are brought out and poured forth. * And that which is in the breasts (of men) shall be made known...﴾ [100:9-10]

On that Day secrets will be revealed, as well as your record of deeds:

﴿that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has recorded it.﴾ [18:49]

O Leader of the Faithful, there is still time for you before death comes and all hopes are shattered and lost (to work righteousness).

O Leader of the Faithful! Judge between your subjects with the laws of Islam, and do not lead them in the way of the wrong-doers. Do not give the proud power over feeble, as they do not observe any pacts or honor towards a believer; and so that you should not bear the sins of others. Do not be deceived by those who enjoy things that lead to your misery, and devour the good things while depriving you of the good things of the Hereafter. Do not think of your power today; but think of it tomorrow when you become the captive of death, standing on the Day of Requitel before Allah in the presence of an assembly of angels, prophets and messengers, when...

﴿(All) faces shall be humbled before (Allah,) the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists.﴾ [20:111]

O Leader of the Faithful! Although I have not attained with this advice the level of wise men or their reason and wisdom before me, I have done my best to be sincere in my advice to you. So take my message as a medicine given by a loving person to his favorite friend... although it has bitter taste, it would serve as a cure.”

Rights Owed to Parents

Children must obey their parents as long as they do not command them with something sinful. Children must treat their parents well and must be kind to them, and strive to please them and provide for them. They must secure for them their

necessities from food, drink, clothing and shelter. Children must speak to them softly and should not be harsh, and they must have patience in serving them and give consideration to their feelings. They should not speak ill to them, hurt their feelings, nor do anything which angers them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor.﴾ [17:23]

Islam has regarded their disobedience to be one of the greatest sins. *Abdullah ibn 'Amr* (رضي الله عنه) narrated that a Bedouin came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said:

“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), what are the gravest of sins?” He responded: **“To worship or associate partners with Allah.”** He said, **“Then what?”** He replied, **“Disobedience to parents.”** He said, **“Then what?”** He replied, **“A submerging³⁶ (*ghamoos*) oath.”** He said, **“And what is a submerging oath?”** He replied, **“A lie which is sworn to usurp the money of another Muslim.”** [*al-Bukhari*]

To portray the status of parents in Islam, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The Pleasure of the Lord is attained through pleasing parents, and the Anger of the Lord is incurred through angering parents.” [*at-Tirmidhi*]

It is obligatory that these rights be given to parents, even if they are of a different *Religion*. *Asmaa' bint Abi Bakr* said:

“My mother came to me while she was a polytheist during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) so I sought permission of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). I said, ‘My mother came to me and she desires [to maintain relations with me].

³⁶ One which submerges its swearer into sin or Hellfire.

Should I maintain ties with my mother?” ” He said to her:
“Yes, maintain relations with your mother.” [*al-Bukhari*]

Mothers are given priority over fathers in matters of kind treatment and good companionship. *Abu Hurairah* (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man said to the Prophet (ﷺ):

“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who has the most right for the best companionship?” He replied, **“Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, and then those after him, and then those after him.”** [*Muslim*]

The Prophet (ﷺ) accorded the mother three rights and the father one right because the mother bears hardships and suffering that the father cannot. Mothers are as Allah (ﷻ) described:

﴿And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship.﴾ [46:15]

She suffers from hardship when she bears him in her womb, taking nutrition from her, during childbirth, and when she feeds him after delivery and stays awake at nights.

Rights Owed to the Husband

[1] His role of leadership. He has the right to be the leader of the house. He is not, however, to be a petty tyrant. He has the right to implement what he sees as the best interest for the affairs of the family. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means.﴾ [4:34]

That is because men generally are more rational in dealing with affairs, in contrast to women who are more emotional. But the husbands should still consult their wives and accept their views in marital affairs.

[2] The wife must obey her husband as long as he does not command her to do something sinful.

[3] The wife must not refuse her husband when he calls her to bed. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If a man calls his wife to his bed and she refuses, and he spends the night angry with her, the angels will continuously curse her till the morning.” [*Muslim*]

[4] The wife should not burden him with requests he cannot bear. She should be keen to please him and fulfill his wishes. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If I would have ordered a person to prostrate to another, I would have ordered a woman to prostrate to her husband.” [*at-Tirmidhi*]

[5] A woman should protect and guard her husband’s wealth, children and honor. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The best of women are those that when you look at her you are pleased, when you order her she obeys, and when you are not present, she keeps your secrets and protects your wealth.” [*Nasaa`i*]

[6] A woman should not leave the house except if her husband agrees, and not to permit into his house anyone whom he dislikes. The Prophet (ﷺ), said:

“Indeed you have rights over your wives and they have rights over you. As for your rights over your wives, they should not permit those who you dislike to enter your houses. Indeed their right over you is to clothe and feed them in a good way.” [*ibn Majaah*]

The Early Muslims used to implement such instructions. ‘*Awf bint Muhlim ash-Shaybani* gave this piece of advice to her daughter on her wedding night:

“My daughter, you have parted your home in which you were born and your nest in which you were raised, to a man you do not know and a companion you have not been familiar with. So be his maid and he will be your slave. Observe for him ten qualities, and he will be a treasure for you: contentment, obedience, taking care of your beauty and pleasant smell, taking heed of the time of his sleep and meals, taking care of his money and children, refraining from disobedience to him, and keeping his secrets. Don’t show pleasure to him when he is worried or grief when he is pleased.”

A Husband’s Obligations towards his Wife

[1] The dowry³⁷: A woman has a right to dowry which should be stated during the marriage contract. It is an essential part of the marriage contract and cannot be conceded by the wife, even if the wife chooses to do so, until the contract has been concluded. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And give to the women (whom you marry) their dowry with a good heart. But if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it and enjoy it without fear of any harm.﴾ [4:4]

[2] Justice and Equality: If a man has more than one wife, he is required to treat them fairly and justly. He should treat them equally regarding food, drink, dress, residence and time allotted to each. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If a man has two wives and favors one of them over the other in fair-treatment, he will come on the Day of Requital with one side tilted.” [Abu Dawood]

[3] Providing for wife and children: A husband is required to provide an appropriate residence and living requirements; such

³⁷ Dowry: In Islam, the dowry is brought by the husband to the bride.

as food, drink, clothing, as well as money to upkeep them, in an amount which is within his means. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Let the rich man spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will grant after hardship, ease.﴾ [65:7]

In order to encourage Muslims to provide for their family, Islam has regarded this as a charity which a person will be rewarded for. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to one of his companions named *Sa'd bin Abi Waqqaas*:

“An indeed whatever you spend, it will be regarded as charity, even a morsel [of food] which you raise to place in your wife’s mouth.” [al-Bukhari]

The wife has the right to take money from her husband without his knowledge if he does not appropriately provide for them. *Hind bint 'Utbah* said to the Prophet (ﷺ):

“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) indeed Abu Sufyan is miserly, and he does not give me what my child and I can suffice with, except what I take from him without his knowledge.” He said, “Take what suffices you and your child without excess.” [al-Bukhari]

[4] Living compassionately and special relations: This is one of the most important things the Religion has commanded the husband to offer... for a wife is in need of a loving heart and a husband who trifles with her and fulfills her desires. This will also guarantee that his wife does not do blameworthy things. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to *Jaabir* (رضي الله عنه):

“Have you gotten married O Jaabir?” I replied, “Yes.” He said, “A virgin or other than that?” I replied, “Other than that.” He said, “Why did you not marry a young virgin so as to sport with her, and make each other laugh?”

[al-Bukhari]

[5] Keeping her secrets. He should keep private (intimate) relationship secrets, and refrain from exposing her secrets, shortcomings and other things he notices or hears from her. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The worst of people in the sight of Allah, on the Day of Requital, is the man who has relations with his wife and she has relations with him, and then he divulges her secrets.” [*Muslim*]

[6] Treating her with kindness: A husband should treat his wife with kindness. He should consult her about mutual everyday matters, provide her with the means of happiness and show to her that he loves her by joking and playing with her. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The best and most complete believers are the best of them in character and manners, and the best of you are the best of you towards their wives.” [*at-Tirmidhi*]

[7] The husband should be patient with her faults, and should not make a point of seeking them out. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Let not a believing man despise a believing woman. Even if he may hate one aspect, he is pleased with another (or he said ‘others’)” [*Muslim*]

[8] He should protect her with jealousy and not take her to evil and corrupt places. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones.﴾ [66:6]

[9] The husband must protect her wealth. He is not to take anything that belongs to her unless she gives him permission, and he is not to use her wealth except by her consent.

The Rights of Relatives

Islam has urged well to do people to help and take care of their relatives, financially – by fulfilling their requirements through obligatory or voluntary charity, and morally – by inquiring about their condition, treating them with kindness and sympathy and sharing their joys and sorrows. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And fear Allah through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and do not cut the relations of the wombs (kinship).﴾ [4:1]

Islam urges Muslims to treat close relatives kindly even if they do not treat him kindly. It encourages that one pardon them even if they have wronged him, and be friendly to them even if they are unfriendly to him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It is not he who maintains ties with his relatives who does so if they do the same; but rather it is he who maintains ties with them even if they cut relation with him.” [al-Bukhari]

Islam has also warned against severing ties of kinship and considered it one of the greatest sins. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Allah created the creation, and when he finished, the womb stood (as if asking for something). He said, “What do you say?” It said, “I am standing seeking refuge in you from severing ties of kinship.” He said, “Are you not pleased that I will maintain ties with those who maintain you (ties of the womb: kinship) and cut ties with those who cut you?” It replied, “Of course I am O Lord.” He said, “That is for you.” (Then *Abu Hurairah* said [reciting the verse]): ‘Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship.’³⁸) [al-Bukhari]

³⁸ Surah Muhammad [47:22]

The Rights of Children

The rights owed to children is that they must be protected, their affairs must be taken care of, they must be given a proper upbringing, and their needs must be met, such as food, drink, dress, and accommodation. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It is sinful enough for a person to be negligent of his family.” [*Abu Dawood*]

One should choose appropriate names for them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed on the Day of Requital you will be called by your names and your father’s names, so keep good names.”
[*Abu Dawood*]

They should be taught good manners, such as modesty, respect for elders, truthfulness, honesty, obedience to parents, and that they be kept away from foul language and evil deeds, such as telling lies, fraud and deceit, treachery, dishonesty, robbery, disobedience to parents, etc.

They should be educated in those things which help them in this life as well as the next. They should be given a proper upbringing, and introduced to righteous company. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Everyone of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a woman is a guardian of her husband’s house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master’s property and is responsible for it.” [*al-Bukhari*]

One should be keen about their safety. This entails that the parents do not invoke Allah against their children. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not supplicate against yourselves, do not supplicate against your children, and do not supplicate against your wealth. [It may be that your supplication] accords with a time in which Allah grants those who ask him, and your supplication be answered.” [Muslim]

Children must be treated equally; one should not prefer some over others in gifts and treatment. This is because unfair treatment will lead to their disobedience and will rouse hatred amongst them. *Nu'man ibn Basheer* narrated:

“My father gave me some of his wealth as charity, and my mother, ‘Amrah bint Rawaahah, said ‘I will not agree until the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) bears witness to it.’ So my father left to the Prophet (ﷺ) to bear witness to his giving of charity to me. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, ‘Did you do the same to all your children?’ to which he replied, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Fear Allah and be just in regards to your children.’ Upon that, my father returned and took back the charity [he had given me].” [Muslim]

The Rights of Neighbors

Islam has enjoined that one be good to his neighbors in all respects. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful.﴾ [4:36]

The Religion has prohibited that one harm his neighbor, verbally or physically. *Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه)* said:

“Such and such woman fasts during the day and prays during the night, but she harms her neighbor by her speech.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘There is no good in her

and she is in the Hellfire.’ It was said, ‘Such and such woman prays [only that] which is obligatory, and fasts [only] the [obligatory] month of Ramadan, and she gives some pieces of *Iqit* (dried yogurt) as charity, but she does not harm anyone with her tongue.’ He replied, ‘She is in Paradise’.” [Ahmad & al-Haakim]

Islam has given the neighbor a great rank and right. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Gabriel continued to command me in regards to neighbors until I thought that he would give them a share of inheritance.” [al-Bukhari]

Islam regards harming one’s neighbor a negater of *Imaan*. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“By Allah he does not believe, by Allah he does not believe, by Allah he does not believe.” They said, “Who O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?” He said, “He whose neighbor is not safe from his evil.” [al-Bukhari]

The Prophet (ﷺ) defined what is owed to the neighbor when he was asked what their rights were. He (ﷺ) said:

‘The best companions with Allah are the best of them to his companions, and the best of neighbors are the best of them to his neighbor.’ [at-Tirmidhi]

One must be patient with the harm their neighbor may cause and be kind and lenient with them. A man said to Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه):

“I have a neighbor who harms, curses and causes me uneasiness.” He replied, “... If he disobeys Allah in your regard, then obey Allah in his.” [Ghazali, in 'Ihya' 'Uloom-ud-Deen', v.2, p.212]

There are three types of neighbors:

1) A Muslim relative. This neighbor has three rights: The rights of relatives, neighbors, and Muslims.

2) A Muslim neighbor. This type has two rights: the rights of neighbors and the rights of Muslims.

3) A non-Muslim neighbor. This type has one right: the right of neighbors. The family of *Abdullah ibn 'Amr* cooked a whole sheep for him, but when he arrived he said,

“Did you give some to our Jewish neighbor? Did you give some to our Jewish neighbor? I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “*Jibreel* (Gabriel) continued to command me in regards to neighbors until I thought that he would give them a share of inheritance.” [at-Tirmidhi]

The Rights of Friends and Companions

Islam has encouraged that one consider the needs of friends and has prescribed certain rights that should be fulfilled in their regard; such as helping them and giving them sincere advice. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The best of companions in the Sight of Allah (ﷻ) is the best of them towards his companion, and the best of neighbors in the Sight of Allah (ﷻ) is the best of them towards his neighbor.” [at-Tirmidhi]

They should receive their rights even after their companion's death. A man from the tribe of *Bani Salamah* asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

“Is there any way I can do good to my parents after they have died?” He (ﷺ) replied: “Yes. Pray the funeral prayer over them, seek forgiveness for them, and implement their pacts which they made. Join the ties of kinship which cannot be so except through them, and honor and be generous to their friends...” [Abu Dawood]

The Rights of Guests

In Islam, guests have the right to be shown generosity. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day let him be generous to his neighbor. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day let him be generous to his guest in what he gives.” A man said, **“And what should he give O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)”** He replied, **“A day and a night, and one must honor his guest for three days. Whoever does more... then it is a charity for him. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day let him speak fair or stay quiet.”** [*al-Bukhari*]

Islam regards honoring one's guest as a righteous deed for which he will be rewarded. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“There is no person like a person who takes the reigns [of his horse] and fights for the sake of Allah, avoiding people's evil, and a person among his sheep in the outskirts giving meal to his guest, honoring his right.”

[*Ahmad & al-Haakim*]

Islam has also described the manner in which a person should treat his guest. He should greet him honorably with a cheerful face and part with him in a good way.

The guest, however, should also take the conditions of his host into consideration, not burdening him with what he cannot afford. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It is unlawful for a Muslim to stay with his brother until he makes him fall into sin.” They say, **“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), how can he (the guest) make him (the host) fall into sin?”** He (ﷺ) replied, **“That he stays with him while he does not have [enough money] to serve him food.”** [*Muslim*]

Imam Ghazali wrote in his book, *“Ihya' ‘Uloom-ud-Deen”* (i.e.: **Revival of Religious Sciences**) about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ):

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would honor his guests. He would even spread his garment for a non-relative guest to sit. He used to offer his guest his own cushion and insist until

they accept it . No one came to him as a guest but thought that he was the most generous of people. He gave each one of his companions sitting with him his due portion of his attention. He would direct his listening, speech, gaze and attention to those who were in his company. Even then, his gathering was characterized by modesty, humbleness and honesty. He would call his companions by their *kunyah* to honor them... He was the farthest from being angry and the easiest to be contented.”

Rights Related to Employment

In regards to work and employment, Islam introduced principles and guidelines which define the relationship between the employer and the employed.

The Rights of the Employed

Islam enjoins that the relationship between employer and employee should be based upon principles of brotherhood, equality and dignity. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Your servants are your brothers whom Allah has placed under your authority. Whoever has his brother under his authority, let him feed him from what he eats and clothe him with what he wears. Let him not burden him with more than he can bear, and if you do, then help him.”

[*al-Bukhari*]

Islam has guaranteed their right to receive wages. The Prophet (ﷺ) narrated from Allah (ﷻ) that He said:

“I will stand against three types of people on the Day of Requital: a person who swears by Me and then betrays his oath, a person who sells a free person and eats the money he gains from it, and a person who hired a workman, takes his full due [of work] from him but does not give him his right (his wages).” [*al-Bukhari*]

It also orders that the wages be negotiated before work begins. In a *Hadeeth* collected by Ahmad, the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade hiring a workman before negotiating his wages.

Islam also commands that wages be paid immediately after the task has been completed. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Pay the workman his wages before his sweat dries.”
[*ibn Majaah*]

They are not to be given more work than they can bear; if he is given more than he can bear, than he should be given extra wages or help. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Let him also not burden him with more than he can bear, and if you do, then help him.” [*al-Bukhari*]

In order to raise the honor and dignity of labor, the Prophet (ﷺ) said that it was the best and most pure of earnings, if done through permissible means. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No person has eaten better food than that which [was bought from the wages which] his own hands toiled. Indeed David (ﷺ), the Prophet of Allah, ate from what his own hands earned.” [*al-Bukhari*]

To encourage manual labor, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“By Him in Whose Hands is my soul, if one of you goes and chops wood, ties it, and carries it on his back, it is better for him than to beg people, whether they give him money or not.” [*al-Bukhari*]

The Rights of the Employer

As Islam required the employer to give the employee his due rights; the employees should also observe the rights of the employer...they should carry out the work in the best manner, without delay or shortcomings. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah likes that if one of you performs some work, that he does it perfectly.” [*Abu Ya’laa*]

In order to encourage people to do their assigned work properly and sincerely, Islam has made this type of wages from the best of earnings. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The best of earnings are those earned by working sincerely and properly.” [Ahmad]

General Rights and Obligations

Islam obligates upon Muslims to regard the conditions of their Muslim brothers, wherever they may be. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The believers in their love, mercy and their feeling for each other are like one body: if one part feels pains, all the other parts feel pain through fever and sleeplessness.” [Muslim]

Islam orders that Muslims strive to improve their condition. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“None of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” [al-Bukhari]

It orders that Muslims stand by their brothers at times of crises and agony. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The believers are like a solid structure, each one (brick) strengthens the other (and then he clasped his hands and intertwined his fingers).” [al-Bukhari]

It orders that Muslims come to the aid of their brothers and assist them in times of war if they are in need. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And if they seek your help in Religion, it is your duty to help them...﴾ [8:72]

It forbids that they be forsaken in their time of need. The Prophet (ﷺ) commanded that the Muslims support their oppressed brothers. [al-Bukhari]

The Moral Aspect of Islam

Islam has perfected the morals and elevated them to a high standard. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“I have been raised to perfect and complete righteous character and morals.” [al-Haakim]

Islam encourages and commands with every good manner, and prohibits and warns against every evil and lewd manner. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish.» [7:199]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do you know who is bankrupt?” They (his companions) said, “The bankrupt among us is he who has neither money nor wealth.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The bankrupt in my nation is he who comes on the Day of Requitul with the [reward of his] prayers, charity, fasting; he comes [with them] but [in his previous life] he had cursed one person and falsely accused another, killed one person and hit another. So this one is given from his reward, and that one as well. When the reward for his good deeds will have all been distributed before he repays his sins, their sins will be taken and thrown upon him, and he will be thrown into the Hellfire.” [Muslim]

The Religion of Islam defined the way a Muslim should relate to others and to his society. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Avoid the prohibited and you will be the best worshipper, be pleased with the sustenance Allah has provided for you and you will be the richest of people, be good to your neighbor and you will be a true believer, love for others what you love for yourself and you will be a true Muslim, and do not laugh much, for

indeed laughing much causes the heart to die.” [at-Tirmidhi]

He (ﷺ) also said:

“A true Muslim is he whom other Muslims are safe from his tongue and his hand, and a true *muhaajir*³⁹ is one who has left what Allah has forbidden.” [al-Bukhari]

Islam aims to form a well knit society in which the individuals show mutual love and mercy to one another; this is accomplished by the implementation of its commands and abandonment of its prohibitions. The following are things that Islam has prohibited:

[1] Associating partners with Allah (*Shirk*) whether it be in regard to His *Ruboobiyah*, or in acts of worship. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him, but He forgives whom he pleases sins other than that.﴾ [4:116]

[2] Sorcery. *Abu Hurairah* reported the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying:

“Stay far away from the destructive sins: associating partners with Allah (*Shirk*) and sorcery.” [al-Bukhari]

[3] Oppression, transgression against others and squandering their rights. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: “(But) the things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are licentious sins whether committed openly or secretly, [all other] sins, unrighteous oppression...﴾ [7:33]

[4] Manslaughter, except if it is legislated in a castigatory punishment. Allah (ﷻ) says:

³⁹ **Muhaajir:** A person who has migrated from a land of disbelief to a land of Islam for the sake of Allah.

﴿And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein, and the Wrath and the Curse of Allah are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him.﴾ [4:93]

This prohibition does not include those who kill or are killed in the process of defending their lives, wealth, or honor. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever is killed in defending his money, he is a martyr, and whoever is killed in defending his family, life, or Religion, he is a martyr.” [Abu Dawood]

[5] Severing familial ties and relations. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship? * Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight...﴾ [47:22-3]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“One who severs ties of kinship will not enter Paradise.” [Muslim]

What is meant by severing ties of kinship is that one does not visit his relatives or is aloof of their needs; also that one acts arrogant towards them or does not help the weak and poor amongst them if he is rich. If one gives charity to a poor person who is not related to him, he would receive the reward for charity, but if he gives charity to a poor person who is related to him, he will receive the reward for joining ties of relation as well as that of charity. If a person was himself poor, he should maintain ties of kinship by greeting his relatives, inquiring about them, and being kind to them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Join and maintain ties of kinship, even if it be by greeting them.” [al-Bazzar]

[6] Fornication and adultery, as well as all things which may lead to them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a great and licentious sin, and an evil way.﴾
[17:32]

Allah (ﷻ) clarifies the punishment of the fornicator in His Words:

﴿The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment.﴾ [24:2]

This is the punishment of a fornicator who was never married before. As for one who commits adultery, his punishment is that he should be stoned to death.

This punishment was also prescribed in some of the previous religions. The Jews of *Madinah* (Medina) raised the case of a Jewess and a Jew who had committed fornication to the Messenger of Allah.

So he said to them: **“Bring me two of the most knowledgeable of your men.”** They came with two sons of a man from Syria, and he asked them: **“What do you find regarding the matter of these two (fornicators) in the Torah?”** They said, **“We find in their regards that if four people bear witness that they saw his penis in her vagina like a kohl⁴⁰ applicator in its jar, they are to be stoned.”** He (ﷺ) asked, **“Then what prevented you from stoning them?”** They said, **“Our authority has been relinquished and we have been forced to prescribe the sentence of death (without stoning).”** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) then

⁴⁰ Kohl: A black powdery substance used as medicine for the eyes as well as beautification. It is kept in a jar and applied with a stick dipped in it, much like mascara.

called for the witnesses. They came with four people and they bore witness that they saw the man's penis in her vagina like a *kohl* applicator in its jar, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ordered them to be stoned. [*Abu Dawood*]

In order for the verdict of stoning to be implemented, one of the following two conditions must be met.

* If the male or female admit to the crime, he or she will be punished.

Abu Hurairah said: "A man from the people came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), while he was in the mosque. He called him, "Messenger of Allah, I have committed adultery." The Prophet (ﷺ) turned away from him. The man came to the side to which the Prophet (ﷺ) turned his face and said, "Messenger of Allah, I have committed adultery." The Prophet (ﷺ) turned away from him. The man came to the side to which the Prophet (ﷺ) turned his face. When he had testified against himself four times, the Prophet (ﷺ) called him and said, "**Are you mad?**" He said, "No, Messenger of Allah." He said, "**Are you a married?**" He answered. "Yes, Messenger of Allah." He said, "**Take him and stone him.**" [*al-Bukhari*]

* Four equitable men bear witness that the accused man's penis entered the woman's vagina. This hardly has occurred, and would take effect if a man openly exhibits his crime. Throughout Islamic history this castigation has not been implemented except in a few instances; in these instances the castigation was implemented because of the confession of the fornicator. The punishment demonstrates the severity of the deed; the reason for its severity is that it would safeguard the *Ummah* (nation) from corruption and evil, and would safeguard the *Ummah* from breaking down... lineage would not be obscured, and problems related to inheritance and marriage

would not occur. It would also safeguard the *Ummah* from diseases and epidemics. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“O migrants (from *Makkah* to *Madinah*) if you are afflicted with five things, and I seek refuge from Allah that you should see them, no licentious sin is committed openly in a society except that Allah causes diseases and plagues which never previously existed to spread amongst them...” [Ibn Maajah]

The worst type of fornication is incest⁴¹.

Islam has also prohibited homosexuality. Allah says when mentioning the story of the People of Lot:

﴿So when Our Commandment came, We turned (the towns of Sodom in Palestine) upside down, and rained on them stones of baked clay, piled up; * Marked from your Lord, and they are not ever far from the evil-doers.﴾

[11:82-3]

Lesbianism is also forbidden in Islam, and certain punishments have been set to eradicate this sinful act.

[7] Islam has forbidden usurping the wealth of orphans and considers it as squandering the rights of the poor. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, they eat up only a fire into their bellies, and they will be burnt in the blazing Fire!﴾ [4:10]

An exception is made from this stern admonition; the one who is poor and looks after the orphan is allowed to take an amount that suffices him from the wealth of the orphan under his

⁴¹ Sexual activity between two people, who are so closely related that their marriage is illegal.

supervision, this being in return for taking care of the child, feeding him, and giving him clothing. He may also try to increase the orphan's wealth, by investing it. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and whoever amongst guardians is rich, he should take no wages, but if he is poor, let him have for himself what is just and reasonable (according to his work).﴾ [4:6]

[8] False testimony and perjury are considered destructive sins. This is due to its detrimental results in society, since it would lead to squandering people's rights and spreading of injustice. It causes harm to both the bearer of witness, as it helps him with his injustice, as well as the innocent victim by depriving him of his due right. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Shall I not tell you the greatest of the grave sins?” They said. **“Indeed O Messenger of Allah.”** He said, **“Associating partners with Allah [*Shirk*] and ill-treatment of parents.”** He was leaning (while he mentioned that), but then he sat up straight (as if he was alarmed) and said, **“And bearing false witness.”** (The narrator) said, **“He continued to repeat this until we wished that he would stop...”**

[*al-Bukhari*]

[9] Gambling for it wastes monetary as well as physical efforts and brings no benefit, neither for the individual or society. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, *al-ansaab*, and *al-azlaam* [arrows for seeking luck or decision] are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination), in order that you may be successful.﴾ [5:90]

If a person wins while gambling, he has usurped other people's wealth without right. The delight felt when winning may also cause him to further use deceptive measures to win again. If one loses, he would have squandered his money in something which brings no benefit. This loss may lead him to steal, if he has no

money left, in order to continue playing, so that he would be able to win back his losses.

[10] Highway robbery, pillaging, murder, and frightening the innocent, for it spreads terror and fear in society and disrupts the peace and security. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off on the opposite sides, or be exiled from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and a great torment is theirs in the Hereafter.» [5:33]

The sentence is given in accordance to the type of crime. *Ibn 'Abbas* said that highway robbers should be killed and crucified if they kill and pillage. If they kill without stealing, they should be killed. If they steal, but do not kill, their hands and feet are to be severed on opposite sides. If they cause fear to wayfarers but do not steal, they are to be banished from that locality. [*al-Baihaqi*]

[11] Taking false oath (a 'dipping' oath) which is to intentionally take a false oath in order to usurp the right of another, thus 'dipping' him into the Hellfire. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily, those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allah's Covenant and their oaths, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter (Paradise). Neither will Allah speak to them, nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful torment.» [3:77]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever usurps the right of a Muslim by swearing a false oath, Allah has obligated for him the Hellfire and prohibited for him Paradise.” They (his companions) said, **“Even if it were something trivial O Messenger of Allah**

(ﷺ)?” He replied, “Even if it were a twig of an *Araak* tree.” [Muslim]

[12] Suicide. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you. And whoever commits that through aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the Fire, and that is easy for Allah.﴾ [4:30]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever kills himself with something will be punished with that thing on the Day of Requit.” [Muslim]

[13] Lying, treachery, deceit, and breaking promises. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly those things entrusted to you (the duties which Allah has ordained for you).﴾ [8:27]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If four traits are found in a person, he is a pure hypocrite, and if he has one of these traits, he has a trait of hypocrisy until he leaves it: when he is entrusted, he proves treacherous; when he speaks, he lies; when he makes an oath, he betrays it; and when he argues, he is obscene.” [Muslim]

In another narration reported in Muslim, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“...even if he prays, fasts, and thinks himself to be a Muslim.”

[14] Islam has forbidden that Muslims boycott or harbor jealousy against one other. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not hate each other, do not envy each other, and do not turn your backs upon each other; but rather be the slaves of Allah and be brothers. It is impermissible for a

Muslim to abandon his brother for more than three days.” [*Muslim*]

[15] Cursing and vulgarity. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed a believer does not curse or insult and he is not foul and obscene in speech.” [*Ahmad & at-Timidhi*]

Even in regards to one’s enemies, Islam calls upon the Muslims to ask Allah to guide them...not invoke Allah against them. *Abu Hurairah* (رضي الله عنه) said that it was said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), supplicate against the pagans.” He replied, **“I was not raised to curse, but rather (sent) as a mercy.”** [*Muslim*]

[16] Miserliness. Wealth belongs to Allah...He has entrusted it to humans, to spend on themselves and their dependants. They must also expend from it, to help needy brothers. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sought refuge with Allah from this evil trait.

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained what would result in a society due to miserliness:

“Avoid cruelty and injustice for, on the Day of Requital, injustice will be a reason that one will be cast into several types of darkness. Guard yourselves against miserliness; for indeed it destroyed nations before you. It led them to bloodshed and to treat unlawful as lawful.”

[*Muslim*]

The Religion of Islam regards the rich person who sees his needy brothers seeking his help but does not help them to be far removed from true faith. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The most evil of diseases is miserliness.” [*Ahmad*]

[17] Extravagance and squandering money unrightfully. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And give to the kindred his due and to the poor and to the wayfarer. But spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. * Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of devils, and Satan (the devil) is ever ungrateful to his Lord.﴾ [17:26-7]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah had forbidden for you disobedience or unkindness to mothers, refusing people charity and asking for it, burying your daughters alive, and he has disliked for you spreading tales, persistent questioning, and squandering money.” [al-Bukhari]

[18] Fanaticism and extremism in matters of *Religion*. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.﴾ [2:185]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed the Religion is one of ease. None shall make the Religion strict except that it will overcome him. So be upright and moderate, do those things which are easy, and give glad tidings of the reward from Allah. Seek help (by performing righteous deeds) in the morning, afternoon, and in a part of the night [your periods of motivation].”

[al-Bukhari]

[19] Self-conceit, pride and vanity. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿‘And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not each arrogant boaster. And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice [braying] of the ass.’﴾ [31:18-19]

About pride, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A person who has a mustard seed’s worth of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise.” A man said, **“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) what if a person likes to wear nice clothing and shoes?”** He replied, **“Indeed Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Pride is that you reject the truth and look down upon others.”** [*Muslim*]

About vanity, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever drags his clothing (on the ground) out of vanity, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Requit.” [*al-Bukhari*]

[20] Spying on people, searching for their faults, thinking ill of them, and backbiting them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Avoid many suspicions, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.﴾
[49:12]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do you know what backbiting is?” They (his companions) said, **“Allah and His Messenger know best!”** He said, **“Mentioning about your brother something which he does not like.”** They said, **“What if this [trait] which I spoke of was actually present in my brother?”** He said, **“If he had [the trait] you spoke of, you have backbitten him, and if not, you have slandered him.”** [*Muslim*]

[21] Eavesdropping. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever listens to other’s conversation while they do not like him to or while they evade him, (molten) lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Requit.”

[*al-Bukhari*]

[22] Gloating over other's misfortunes. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not show joy for your brother's misfortune, so that Allah will have mercy upon him and save you in a trial.”

[at-Tirmidi]

[23] Interfering into affairs which do not concern them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“From the things which indicate the completeness of a person's Islam is that he does not indulge in affairs which do not concern him.” *[at-Tirmidhi]*

[24] Scoffing at others, whether by giving them nicknames or employing other types of speech, actions and signs. It forbids that one belittle or ridicule others. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames.» [49:11]

[25] It is forbidden for a judge to be unjust in his rulings, for in Islam, a judge is regarded as one who implements the law of Allah. He holds an executive role... not one of legislation. If he is unjust, he betrays the trust which was given to him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.» [5:44]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Judges are of three types; two of whom are in the Fire, and one who is in Paradise. A man, who ruled unjustly while he knows, is in the Fire. A judge who rules while he is ignorant and wrongs people is in the Fire. And a judge who ruled with the truth is in Paradise.”

[Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

[26] Cuckoldry, i.e. the person is not protective of his relatives and turns a blind eye to their promiscuity. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Allah will not look at three types of people on the Day of Requital: one who is disobedient to his parents, a woman who resembles men, and a cuckold.” [Nasaa`i]

[27] Resembling the opposite sex. *Ibn ‘Abbaas* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) cursed men who make themselves resemble women, and women who make themselves resemble men.” [al-Bukhari]

[28] Reminding others of favors you have done for them or goodness you may have shown them. Allah’s (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Do not render in vain your Sadaqah (charity) by reminders of your generosity or by injury.﴾” [2:264]

[29] Taking back a gift. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A person who takes back a gift he gave is like a dog who vomits and then takes back his vomit.”

[al-Bukhari & Muslim]

[30] Tale-carrying; which is to inform someone about what others have said about him in order to spoil the relations or for other evil intentions. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And obey not everyone who swears much, and is considered worthless, A slanderer, going about carrying tales.﴾ [68:10-11]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“One who carries tales will not enter Paradise.” [Muslim]

The evil consequences which result in tale-carrying are well known. It stirs enmity and hatred amongst people and causes them to abandon one another, and this is something which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade. He said:

“It is not permissible for a person to abandon his brother for more than three nights: they meet, each one turning away from the other. The best of the two is the first of them to greet the other (with *Salaam*).” [al-Bukhari]

Tale-carrying may result in ill-thinking and spying on others in order to reach the truth about what was said. Also, various sins might be committed which Allah (ﷻ) prohibited in His Words:

﴿...indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not...﴾ [49:12]

[31] Being arrogant towards the weak, whether that weakness be physical, such as the ill, disabled, or elderly; or financial, such as the poor, needy, or those over whom he has authority. Society should be built upon mercy, love, and fraternity. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful.﴾ [4:36]

[32] Intending harm to the heirs by bequeathing, such as falsely claiming that he has a loan. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...after payment of legacies he (or she) may have bequeathed or debts, so that no loss is caused (to anyone).﴾ [4:11]

Prohibitions Regarding Food, Drink, and Clothing.

[1] Islam forbids wine and all types of addictive drugs, whether they are ingested, inhaled or injected. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), gambling, stone altars on which the polytheists slaughtered to their idols, arrows for seeking luck or

decision are an abomination of Satan's handiwork; so avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. * Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks, etc.) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from the Prayer. So, will you not then abstain?﴾ [5:90-1]

In order to prevent those who seek to profit through its sale or aid in its spread, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Allah has cursed wine, the one who pours it, the one who drinks it, the one who squeezes it, the one who it was squeezed for, the one who carries it, the one it is carried to, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, and the one who profits from it.” [Abu Dawod]

With this, Islam preserves the mind and other senses from anything which would harm or damage them. It also seeks to safeguard mankind from falling to the level of creation which has no awareness. As is well-known, those who drink alcohol or take drugs would become addicted to them. Therefore, he would try to appease this urge by acquiring money by any means; even if it means stealing and killing. One must keep in mind, the atrocious crimes people commit against other's honor and chastity on account of these substances. For this reason, Islam refers to it being the ‘mother’ of all great sins.

[2] Islam has forbidden the consumption of carrion, pigs, and all other things mentioned in Allah's (ﷻ) Words:

﴿Forbidden to you (for food) are: *al-maytah* (dead animals - cattle-beast not slaughtered) blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering [the meat of which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols, etc.], and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that

which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on stone altars. (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision, (all) that is disobedience of Allah and sin.﴾
[5:3]

It is not lawful to eat things which were slaughtered, and over which the Name of Allah was not mentioned, or intentionally left aside. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Eat not (O believers) of that (meat) on which Allah's Name has not been pronounced (at the time of the slaughtering of the animal), for sure it is a sin and disobedience of Allah.﴾ [6:121]

It has forbidden the meat of animals which have canine teeth; such as lions, leopards, wolves and the like. It has also forbidden birds that have talons such as eagles, falcons, hawks and other birds of prey.

It has forbidden all types of food or drink which are harmful to one's body, such as cigarettes and similar things. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you.﴾ [4:29]

[3] It has forbidden men from wearing silk, gold, and silver, but has deemed them permissible for women. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah made the wearing of silk and gold permissible for the women of my *Ummah*, but forbidden for its men.” [*Nasaa`i*]

It is not allowed for both males and females, though, to eat or drink from utensils made from either gold or silver, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not drink from gold or silver utensils and do not eat from its plate for indeed it is for them (the disbelievers) in this life and for us in the next.” [*al-Bukhari*]

The Commandments of Islam

The following are examples of what Islam has commanded:

[1] Justice and equity. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, Allah enjoins justice and doing deeds of righteousness perfectly, and giving (help) to kith and kin; and forbids all licentious acts, evil, and oppression, He admonishes you, that you may take heed.﴾ [16:90]

Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) the first Caliph of Islam, said the following words when he took command:

“Those who you regard as strong are weak in my sight until I take the rights they owe, and the weak are strong until I give them their right. Obey me as long as I obey Allah in your regards...”

One must be just in regards to both relatives as well as those who are not related to him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And whenever you give your word [i.e. judge between men or give evidence, etc.], say the truth even if a near relative is concerned, and fulfill the Covenant of Allah, This He commands you that you may remember.﴾ [6:152]

Justice should be shown in times of pleasure and in times of anger, to Muslims and disbelievers. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah and be just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well Acquainted with what you do.﴾ [5:8]

Allah states that justice may be imposed by force. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance [justice] that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power

(in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind.﴾ [57:25]

In explaining this verse, *Sheik Islam b. Taymiyyah* said:

“The goal of sending Messengers and revealing Books is that humans stand for justice, which is achieved through fulfilling the rights of Allah and the rights of His creation. Whoever deviates away from the Book, he is straightened with ‘iron’.”

[2] It enjoins preferring others over oneself, for it is an indication of true love and well-wishing of which its results can be clearly felt in society. It builds and strengthens individual bonds and is indicative of their love to help and serve one another. Allah (ﷻ) says praising those who prefer good for others over themselves:

﴿...and they give others preference over themselves, even though they were in need. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.﴾ [59:9]

[3] It commands that one seek company with the righteous and forbids that one seek evil companionship. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave an excellent example explaining the consequences of keeping company of both good and evil people. He (ﷺ) said:

“The example of a righteous and evil companion is like one who carries perfume and another who is a blacksmith. As for the one who carries perfume, he will either give you some perfume, you might buy some, or (at least) you will find a pleasing scent with him. As for the blacksmith, either he [the blacksmith] will burn his clothes, or he will find a hideous odor from him.”

[*al-Bukhari*]

[4] It orders that Muslims strive to reconcile between people at times of dispute or disunity. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders charity, righteous acts, or conciliation between mankind, and he who does this, seeking the good Pleasure of Allah, We shall give him a great reward.» [4:114]

Reconciling between people has a great reward, similar to the reward of prayer, fasting, and other obligatory acts of worship. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Shall I not inform you of a level even better than the Fast, the Prayer, and charity? Reconciling between people, for indeed disunity between people is what uproots the Religion.” [Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

Islam has legalized lying in this regard...to make people unite and prevent division. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“I do not regard a lie when a person tries to reconcile between people saying something not intending what was understood, (whether to) reconcile between people, at times of war, or a husband or wife in order to please their spouse.” [Abu Dawood]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said:

“He is not a liar... him who seeks to reconcile between people by saying good things about him.” [al-Bukhari]

[5] It commands that Muslims enjoin virtue and righteousness and prevent evil and vice with all means possible, each according to his ability. This is the basis for security in society which prevents the spread of injustice, moral corruption, and ensures that rights are maintained and the law that is implemented is the *Shari'ah*, not laws of pandemonium. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever of you sees an evil act, let him change it with his hand, if he is not able, then with his tongue, and if he is not able, then with his heart, and that is the weakest [level] of *Imaan*.” [Muslim]

Through this, those who are ignorant of some aspects of Islam would learn them, and those who are heedless would be admonished. The morally corrupt are rectified while those who are righteous are helped, and the Law of Allah is upheld and implemented. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Help you one another in righteousness and piety; and do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.﴾ [5:2]

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained the consequences if people stop enjoining the good and forbidding evil. He (ﷺ) said:

“The likes of those who stay within the limits set by Allah and those who trespass them is like a group of people who divided their places on a ship (before setting out to sea). Some of them were on the top deck while others were on the lower deck. When those on the lower deck required water, they had to pass by those on top. So they said, ‘If we make a hole in our part, we will not have to bother those on top.’ If they (those on top) left them to do as they pleased, they would all be destroyed, and if they were stopped they would all be saved.” [al-Bukhari]

Allah also mentions the punishment related to forsaking this act. He (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they disobeyed (Allah and the Messengers) and were ever transgressing beyond bounds. * They used not to forbid one another from the evil which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do.﴾ [5:78-9]

Islam, however, has prescribed some guidelines and principles which must be followed when enjoining good and prohibiting evil. From them are the following:

1. The one who takes up this task must be knowledgeable about what he enjoins or prohibits, so that he would not cause the person he is talking to stray away from the Religion. *Sufyaan bin Abdullah ath-Thaqafi* said:

“I said: '**O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), advise me with something which I can abide by.**' He said: '**Say My Lord is Allah, and then stay upright.**' I said: '**O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), what do you fear for me the most?**' He then took hold of his tongue and said: '**This!**'” [at-Tirmidhi]

Ibn Hibban, may Allah have mercy on him, said:

'The reason the Prophet (ﷺ) held his tongue with his hand, and said: '**this**' when he could have said '**the tongue**' without holding it with his hand was that the Prophet (ﷺ) knew well the knowledge he was teaching people; so he wanted to apply the knowledge he was teaching...he knew this knowledge because he told the one who asked: 'the thing I fear most, is that it would lead you through many trials'...so he ordered him to refrain from talking much. Therefore, the Prophet (ﷺ) applied what he knew, to clarify the difference between places a person should seek knowledge and when he should give knowledge.'

2. Prohibiting an evil should not lead to a greater one being committed.

3. He should not engage in what he prohibits nor should he neglect what he enjoins. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? * Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do.﴾ [61:2-3]

4. He should be gentle and kind when he enjoins or prohibits. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Nothing is done with kindness except that it is beautified, and nothing is devoid of kindness except that it is disfigured.” [Muslim]

5. He should also bear any inconvenience resulting from this task. Allah (ﷻ) mentions that *Luqman* said in his great advice to his son:

﴿O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed that is of the matters (requiring) determination.﴾ [31:17]

[6] Islam has enjoined good manners. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The most complete Believers in terms of faith are those who have the best manners, and the best of you is the best to his family.” [at-Tirmidhi]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also pointed out the reward of good manners. He said:

“The most beloved and closest of you to me on the Day of Requitah are the best of you in character. And indeed the most hated and farthest of you to me on the Day of Requitah are those who talk with affectation, boast, and the ‘Mutafayhiqoon’.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) We understood those who talk with affectation and those who boast, but who are the ‘Mutafayhiqoon’?” He said: “The arrogant.” [at-Tirmidhi]

[7] Islam has enjoined acts of kindness. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah is benevolent and loves benevolence, and excellent manners, and dislikes poor manners.” [Tabraani in al-Awsat]

[8] Islam has legislated that one confirm reports before issuing a judgment concerning them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done.﴾ [49:6]

[9] Islam has enjoined that people be sincere towards others. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The Religion is sincerity.” We asked, **“To whom?”** He replied, **“To Allah, to His Book, to His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their general folk.”**
[*Muslim*]

Being sincere to Allah is achieved by believing in Him, worshipping Him alone, negating any partners that are associated with him, and declaring Him far removed from any imperfection in His Names and Attributes. One should believe that He is the Disposer of all affairs of this universe. Whatever He wills must come to pass, and whatever He does not, will never be. One must comply with all His commands and avoid His prohibitions.

Sincerity towards His Book is realized by believing that it is the Word of Allah, revealed by Him, and that it is the last of the Heavenly Scriptures. One must apply and abide by its commands, and hold as lawful all that it has declared as such, and refrain from all that is prohibited therein.

Sincerity towards His Messenger entails that one obey his orders, believe everything He informed us of, and refrain from that which He prohibited. He must be loved and respected, and his Sunnah must be followed and disseminated amongst the masses.

One must show sincerity to the leaders of the Muslims by obeying them unless they enjoin sin, by guiding them to that which is best and helping them in it, and by abstaining from rebelling against them. Rather, they must be advised gently and reminded of the rights of the people.

Sincerity towards the Muslim masses is achieved by guiding them to what is good and beneficial, both in matters concerning their Religion and worldly life. One should help them in fulfilling their needs, and protect them from harm. One should love for them what he loves for himself and dislike for them what he dislikes for himself, and he should treat them in the same manner he would like to be treated.

[10] Islam has enjoined generosity due to the affection and love it spreads. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Nothing is heavier in the scale than good manners.”

[Abu Dawood]

Allah (ﷻ) set a guideline in the following verse defining the limits of generosity. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty.﴾ [17:29]

[11] Islam has enjoined concealing people’s faults and helping to relieve their distress and to ease their affairs. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever eases some distress of a Muslim in this world, Allah will ease some distress of his on the Day of Recompense. Whoever eases the burden of a loan (by repaying it, pardoning it, or extending the time period for payment) for one for whom it is hard to repay it, Allah will make things easy for him in this life as well as the next. Whoever covers the fault of a Muslim, Allah will cover his faults in this life and the next. Allah continues to help his slave as long as he helps his brothers.”
[Muslim]

[12] Islam has enjoined and encouraged patience, whether in doing deeds of obedience or refraining from prohibitions. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«So wait patiently for the Decision of your Lord, for verily, you are under Our Eyes.» [52:48]

It has also enjoined patience in facing the different trials through which Allah tests His slaves, such as poverty, hunger, disease, and fear. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient. * Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: ‘Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.’ * They are those on whom are the blessings from their Lord, and receive Mercy, and it is they who are the guided-ones.» [2:155-7]

[13] Islam commands that one suppress his anger and pardon others while having the ability to take revenge. This strengthens the bonds between the members of the society and distances those things which may raise enmity and sever ties. Allah (ﷻ) has promised a great reward and has highly praised those who try to acquire this characteristic. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And race to forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious. Those who spend in times of prosperity and adversity, who repress their anger, and who pardon others; verily, Allah loves the doers of good.» [3:133-4]

Islam orders that one return an evil act with goodness in order to join the hearts and remove hatred as well as to deter one from taking revenge. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The good deed and the evil deed are not equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better. Then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend.» [41:34]

A Glimpse at some Islamic Etiquettes

The Religion of Islam has introduced various manners which Muslims are encouraged to abide by in order to form a complete Islamic personality. From them are the following.

• Dining Etiquettes

[1] One should begin their meal by mentioning the name of Allah by saying: **'Bismillaah** [i.e. I begin with the Name of Allah] and conclude by praising and thanking Him by saying ***Al-hamdu lillaah***: [i.e. All praise and thanks are for Allah]. One should eat from the nearest side of the dish to him and use his right hand, for the left hand is generally used for cleaning unpleasant things. *'Umar bin Abi Salamah* said:

“When I was a young boy, I was [eating] in the room of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and my hands were reaching (for food) all over the plate (to eat). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me:

“O young boy, mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you.”
[*al-Bukhari*]

[2] One should never complain or criticize the food however distasteful it may be. *Abu Hurairah* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never criticized any food. If he liked it he would eat it, if not he would leave it.”
[*al-Bukhari*]

[3] One should avoid eating or drinking in excess. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not those who waste by extravagance﴾ [7:31]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Man does not fill a container worse than the stomach. It is enough that a human takes a few morsels with which he can straighten his back, and if he must [eat more], then [let him keep] a third for his food, a third for his drink, and a third for his breath.” [at-Tirmidhi]

[4] One should not breathe or blow into vessels. Ibn ‘Abbas said that

the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade breathing into vessels or blowing into them.” [Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

[5] One should not soil food or beverage for others.

[6] One should eat with others and not individually. A man said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

“Indeed we eat but our hunger is not satiated.” He said: “Do you gather to eat or eat individually?” He said: “Individually.” He said: “Gather and eat together and mention the Name of Allah, and your [food] will be blessed.” [Abu Dawood & ibn Maajah]

[7] One must seek permission to take others to an invitation. A person from the Ansar named *Abu Shu‘aib* invited five people from which the Prophet (ﷺ) was one of them. Another person came with them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“This man has come with us: If you allow, he will come in; if not he will go back.” The host said: “No, rather, I give him my permission.” [al-Bukhari]

• Manners of Relieving Oneself

When one enters the toilet, they should supplicate. *Anas* said that the Prophet (ﷺ) upon relieving himself would say:

“Bismillah Allahumma inni a‘oodhu bika min al-kubthi wal-khabaa`ith.”

“I begin with the Name of Allah, O Allah, indeed I seek refuge in you from the male and female *Jinn*.”)

[*al-Bukhari*]

A'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

“When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would leave the place where he relieved himself, he would say:

‘*Ghufraanak*’

(‘I seek your forgiveness.’)\

[*Abu Dawood, at-Tirmidhi & ibn Maajah*]

One should not face the *Qiblah* (direction of Mecca) nor give it his back while relieving himself. *Abu Hurairah* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“Indeed I am only like a father is to his son. You should not face the *Qiblah* nor give it your backs (when one of you goes to relieve himself) nor should they wipe themselves with less than three rocks, while not using a piece of dung or a bone” [*Abu Dawood & ibn Maajah*]

One should conceal himself when he answers the call of nature. *Jaabir* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“Whenever the Prophet wanted to relieve himself he would retreat to a place where no one could see him.”
[*Abu Dawood*]

One should not use his right hand in order to clean filth. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“When one of you drinks, they should not breathe in the vessel, when he goes to relieve himself, he should not touch his private part with his right hand, and he should not wipe himself with his right hand.”

[*al-Bukhari*]

• Manners of Seeking Permission

[1] A person is outside a house and seeks permission to enter. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have sought permission and greeted those in them,﴾ [24:27]

[2] A person is inside a house and seeks permission to enter a room. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And when the children among you come to puberty, then let them (also) ask for permission, as those senior to them (in age).﴾ [24:59]

This is intended to safeguard the households and protect the privacy of homes, as indicated in the Prophet's (ﷺ) words:

“A man was looking into the room of the Prophet (ﷺ) from a hole in the door, and the Prophet (ﷺ) had a tooth of a comb with which he was scratching his head. He said to him, ‘If I had known you were looking, I would have poked your eye with it. Indeed seeking permission was legislated so that one would not see [the private affairs of one’s house]’.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

One should not be persistent in seeking permission. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“One should seek permission thrice. If you are granted permission [then enter] and if not, go back.” [Muslim]

The person seeking permission should make himself known. Jaabir (رضي الله عنه) said:

“I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) in regards to a loan of my father. I knocked on the door and he said, ‘Who is there?’ I said: ‘I am’ He replied, ‘I am, I am!!’ as if he did not like [what I said].” [al-Bukhari]

• Manners of Greeting

Islam has encouraged that members of society greet each other with *Salaam* due to love and friendship which it produces. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“You will never enter Paradise until you believe, and you will never believe fully until you love each other. Shall I not lead you to something that if you do it, you will love each other? Spread the greetings of ‘Salaam’ amongst yourselves.” [Muslim]

It is obligatory that one replies if he is greeted with *Salaam*. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally.﴾ [4:86]

Islam has also clarified who must initiate the greeting. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A rider should greet a pedestrian, a pedestrian should greet one who is seated, and a smaller group of people should greet a larger.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

• Manners that relate to the Sitting Place

One should greet those who are present in the gathering, upon entering as well as exiting. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If one of you comes to a gathering, let him greet them with *Salaam*. If it seems to him that he should sit, then let him sit. When he stands [to leave] then let him greet them [again] with *Salaam*, for indeed the first one is no more important than the other.” [Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

People should make room for others. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, (spread out and) make room. Allah

will give you (ample) room (hereafter). And when you are told to rise up, rise up. Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.﴾ [58:11]

One should not ask others to stand for them to be seated in their place. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A person should not cause another to stand from his place and then sit in it, but rather, you should spread out and make room.” [Muslim]

If a person stands and leaves from his seat, he has more right over it if he returns. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If a person stands from his seat and returns to it, he has more right to it.” [Muslim]

One should not part two people sitting together except after seeking permission from both. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It is not permissible for a person to separate two people (by sitting between them) unless they give permission.” [Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

One should not talk to someone privately in the presence of a third person. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If you are three, two people should not privately speak without the third until you mix with other people, for that will grieve him.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

One should not sit in the middle of a circle or group of people. Hudhaifah reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“He who sits in the center of gatherings is cursed.”

[Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi]

People in a gathering should not busy themselves with nonsense or talk void of the remembrance of Allah or useful discussions

of worldly and religious affairs. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“No people rise from an assembly in which the name of Allah was not mentioned, except that they are like those who rise from around a donkey’s carcass, and the assembly will be a source of sorrow for them.”

[*Abu Dawood*]

A person should not do anything which his companions in the gathering dislike.

• **Manners of Gathering**

Islam gives consideration to the general feeling of people who gather at any place; so people would desire to gather. Therefore, Islam instructs its followers to be clean; they should not come with a bad odor that bothers others, and they should come well-dressed so that people would not be harmed by his sight. Islam also instructs people to pay attention to the speaker without interrupting him and to sit where they find room without crossing people or causing them any inconvenience. The Prophet (ﷺ) said about the gathering of the Friday Prayer (*Jumu'ah*):

“Whoever takes a bath on Friday, applies some scent on if any, wears the best of his clothes, then attends Friday prayer without crossing over people’s necks and performs whatever *rak’ahs*⁴² he is able, and then keeps quiet when the *Imam* mounts the pulpit until he concludes prayer, his prayer will be an atonement for the whole week preceding that prayer.” [*Abu Dawood & Ibn Maajah*]

If someone sneezes, he should say,

⁴² **Rak'ah:** Unit of prayer.

“Alhamdulillah.” (All praise is due to Allah)
Those who hear him should say,

“Yarhamuk-Allahu (may Allah have mercy on you).”
The one who sneezes should again reply to them by saying,

“Yahdeekumullaah wa yuslihu baalakum
(may Allah guide you and improve your heart, your living, and your affairs).”

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“When one of you sneezes, let him say, ‘Alhamdulillah,’ and then let his brother or companion say to him, ‘Yarhamuk-Allahu,’ and then let him (the one who sneezed) say, ‘Yahdee kum-ullaah wa yuslihu baalakum.’” [al-Bukhari]

From its manners is what *Abu Hurairah* (رضي الله عنه) related, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“When one of you sneezes, let him place his hands on his face and lower his voice.” [al-Haakim]

*When someone feels like yawning, they should try to stop it as much as possible. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed Allah loves sneezes but hates yawns. When one of you sneezes and then thanks and praises Allah, it is his right that every Muslim that hears him says “Yarhamuk-Allah”. As for yawning, it is from Satan, so let a person try to suppress it as much as possible. And if one of you sighs, “Aahh!” [while doing so], Shaytaan laughs.” [al-Bukhari]

One should not belch in public. *Ibn ‘Umar* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“A man belched while in the company of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and so he said to him: ‘Save us from your belching, for the most satiated in this life will be hungry for the longest time on the Day of Resurrection.’ ” [at-Tirmidhi & Ibn Maajah]

• Manners of Conversation

The person should always be attentive to the speaker, without interrupting him, until he finishes. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) started his speech during the Farewell Pilgrimage by saying to one of his companions:

“Ask the people to keep quiet.” [*al-Bukhari & Muslim*]

One should speak clearly and adequately explain his intent so that the listener may understand. ‘A’ishah, the Prophet’s wife, said:

“The Prophet’s words were clear so that anyone who heard him could understand him.” [*Abu Dawood*]

The speaker as well as the listener should be cheerful and pleasant in their expressions and speech. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not underestimate any good deed, even meeting your brother with a cheerful face.” [*Muslim*]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said:

“There is a charity to be given for every joint of the human body (as a sign of gratitude to Allah) everyday the sun rises. To judge justly between two persons is regarded as charity, and to help a man concerning his riding animal by helping him to ride it or by lifting his luggage on to it, is also regarded as charity, and (saying) a good word is also charity, and every step taken on one’s way to offer the compulsory prayer (in the mosque) is also a charity and to remove a harmful thing from the way is also a charity.” [*al-Bukhari*]

• Manners of Joking

Life in Islam is not as some incorrectly believe; that it must not have any entertainment whatsoever. A companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) named *Handalah al-Usaidi* said:

“*Abu Bakr* met me and asked: ‘How are you O *Handalah*?’ He replied, ‘*Handalah* has become a hypocrite!’ He replied, ‘Far removed is Allah from every imperfection! What are you saying?’ *Handalah* said: ‘When we are with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he reminds us about the Hellfire and Paradise as if it is before our eyes, but when we leave the company of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), we become involved with our wives, children and property and we forget much.’ *Abu Bakr* said: ‘By Allah, indeed the same happens to me.’ So *Abu Bakr* and I left until we entered upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). I said, ‘*Handalah* has become a hypocrite O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)!’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied, ‘And how is that?’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), when we are with you, you remind us about the Hellfire and Paradise as if it is before our eyes, but when we leave your company, we become involved with our wives, children and property and forget much.’ To that, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) commented: ‘By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, if you stay in that state you are when you are with me, the angels would [descend and] shake your hands in your beds and when you walk, but rather, O *Handalah*, there is a time for this and a time for that (and he said this three times).’ ” [Muslim]

Here the Prophet explained that permissible enjoyment and self-refreshment is something desirable so that man would regain his activity and liveliness. The Prophet (ﷺ) taught his companions the manners of joking when they asked him:

“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), you joke with us?” He said: “Yes, but I do not speak except that which is correct and true.” [at-Tirmidhi]

One may joke with his actions as well as with his speech. *Anas bin Malik* (رضي الله عنه) reported that

a Bedouin called *Zaahir* used to bring presents from the desert to the Prophet (ﷺ), and the Prophet (ﷺ) used to supply him with provisions upon leaving. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“Indeed *Zaahir* is our ‘desert’ and we are his ‘city’.”** One day, the Prophet (ﷺ) came to him (unsuspectingly) while he was selling his goods and grasped him from behind. *Zaahir* exclaimed: **‘Release me!’** Then he looked behind him and recognized the Prophet (ﷺ), so he pressed his back against his chest. The Prophet (ﷺ) called out: **“Who will purchase this slave?”** *Zaahir* said: **“O Messenger of Allah, you will find me worthless!”** The Prophet (ﷺ) answered: **“But to Allah, you are not worthless (or he said) Rather you are valuable in Allah’s estimation.”** [*Ibn Hibbaan*]

One should not joke in a way to harm or ill-treat another Muslim. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It is not permissible for a Muslim to scare another Muslim.” [*Abu Dawood*]

He (ﷺ) also said:

“Let not anyone take his brother’s things (to anger him) seriously or jokingly.” [*Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi*]

A person should never lie while joking. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Woe to the one who lies in his speech to make people laugh. Woe to him! Woe to him!” [*Ahmad & Abu Dawood*]

- **Etiquettes of Visiting the Ill**

Islam strongly encourages that one visits the ill...and has deemed it a right a Muslim owes to his brother. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The right of a Muslim over another are five: returning greetings of *Salaam*, visiting the sick, following the

burial ceremony, answering his invitation and saying *yarhamukAllah* to one who sneezes.” [al-Bukhari]

As for the reward a Muslim receives for visiting his sick brother, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever visits a sick person, he would receive continuous reward until he returns.” [Muslim]

One should show love and sympathy when he visits them. *A'ishah b. Sa'd* said that her father said:

'I was sick in Makkah, so the Prophet came to visit me, and he put his hand on my forehead and wiped over my chest and stomach, and supplicated Allah saying: 'O Allah, heal Sa'd...' [Abu Dawood]

One should supplicate for the sick. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever visits the sick whose time was not written and says seven times:

Asalullaah al-‘Adheem, Rubb al-‘Arsh il-‘Adheem an yashfiyak.

(I beseech Allah, the Magnificent, the *Rubb* of the Magnificent Throne, that He cures you).

And Allah will cure him of that sickness.”

[*Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi*]

• **Etiquettes of Condolence**

Condolence has been prescribed to console the deceased's family and lighten their pain and distress. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“No believer consoles his brother at a time of distress except that Allah (ﷻ) will clothe him with ornaments of honor on the Day of Requit.” [ibn Maajah]

One should supplicate for the family of the deceased and encourage them to have patience and think of the reward they

will receive from Allah for doing so in this time of distress. *Usaamah bin Zaid* said:

“We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) when a message was sent by one of his daughters saying that she is calling him and that a child of hers was dying. He said to the messenger: ‘Go back to her and say that what Allah took back (the child) was His (to begin with) and His is what he gave, and everything with Allah is for a prescribed time. Order her to have patience and seek reward from Allah.’ The messenger came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: ‘She has sworn an oath that you come to her.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) stood along with *Sa’d bin ‘Ubaadah* and *Mu’aadh bin Jabal*. I set off with them, and (when we arrived) he lifted up the young boy and his soul was leaving his body [known by his shaking] like (the sound made) when (pouring water or other things) into a empty gourd. His (the Prophet’s (ﷺ)) eyes were wet, and *Sa’d* exclaimed: **“What is this O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?” He replied, **“This is mercy which Allah instilled in the hearts of his slaves. Indeed the only people who Allah shows mercy to from his slaves are those who also show mercy.”** [*al-Bukhari & Muslim*]**

One should supplicate to Allah that He shows mercy to the deceased. *Imam Ash-Shaafi’i* liked that one say to the family of the deceased:

“May Allah give you a great reward, grant you patience, and forgive your deceased [relative].”

It is desirable to prepare food for the family of the deceased. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Prepare food for the family of *Ja’far*, for indeed a matter has come which has preoccupied them.”

[*Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi*]

• The Etiquettes of Sleeping

When one wishes to sleep, he should mention the Name of Allah and lie down on his right side, making sure that there is nothing present which might harm him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“When one of your retreats to his bed, let him take the side of his garment and dust off his bed with it and mention Allah’s Name, for indeed he does not know what entered it after he left. If he wishes to lie down, let him lie down on his right side and say:

‘Subhaanak-Allahumma Rabbi bika wada’tu janbi, wa bika arfa’uhu. In amsakta nafsi, faghfir lahaa. Wa in arsaltahaa, fahfadh-haa bimaa tahfadhu bihi ‘ibaadak as-saaliheen. ‘

(‘How perfect You are O Allah. My *Rubb* I lie down and with Your name I rise, so if You should take my soul then have mercy upon it, and if You should return my soul then protect it in the manner You do so with Your righteous slaves’.)” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Upon rising, one should recite the supplications made by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Hudhaifah (رضي الله عنه) said:

“When the Prophet (ﷺ) would go to his bed, he would say:

‘Bismika amootu wa ahyaaa.’

(‘With your Name I die and I live.’)

Upon rising, he would say:

‘Alhamdulillaah-illadhi ahyaanaa ba’da maa amaatanaa wa ilayh-in-nushoor.’

(‘ All praise and thanks be to the One who brought us to life after having caused us to die, and to Him will we be resurrected’)”

One should try to retire to bed early at night, except in cases of necessity.

The Prophet (ﷺ) hated to sleep before the Night ('Ishaa') Prayer and to speak after it.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

It is disliked to sleep on one's stomach. *Abu Hurairah* (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) passed by a person lying on his stomach and kicked him hard. He said to him:

“Indeed Allah dislikes this way of lying.” [at-Tirmidhi]

One should be careful and take precautions from things which might bring harm. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed this fire is an enemy to you, so when you sleep, extinguish it.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

• **Manner of Approaching One's Spouse**

Before having marital relations with your spouse, one should mention the Name of Allah in the manner the Prophet (ﷺ) described. He said:

“If someone says (before sexual intercourse) when he approached his wife, ‘With the Name of Allah; O Allah, keep Satan away from us, and keep Satan away from what you grant us [from offspring],’ then, if Allah grants them a child, he (Satan) will not harm him.” [al-Bukhari]

One should sport with his spouse. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to *Jaabir*:

“Did you get married O *Jaabir*?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “To a virgin or a previously married woman? *Jaabir* answered: 'To a previously married woman.' He said: 'Why didn't you get married to a virgin, so that you sport with her, and make her laugh and she makes you laugh.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

A'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would kiss me while he was fasting.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

They may enjoy each other in any way they like, with the condition the Prophet (ﷺ) explained to ‘Umar when he came to him saying:

“O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) I am destroyed!” He said: “And what has destroyed you?” He replied, “I changed [the position] of my mount (wife) in the night!” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not answer him. He (‘Umar) said: “Then this verse was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

﴿Your wives are a tilth for you, so go in unto your tilth as how and when you wish.﴾ [2:223]

Go to them front or behind, but avoid the anus and menstruation⁴³.” [at-Tirmidhi & ibn Maajah]

One should not withdraw after ejaculation until she has fulfilled her desire. One should keep whatever takes place between them and their partner private. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed from the worst stations of people on the Day of Resurrection is one who has marital relations with his wife and then spreads her private matters.” [Muslim]

• **Etiquettes of Traveling**

Before one sets out on a journey, he should make sure that he returns all trusts to their owners, settles any debts, and leaves his family sufficient provisions. He should also return anything he has taken unjustly to its rightful owner. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever has something which he took unjustly from his brother, let him free himself from it, for indeed there is no Dinar nor Dirham [that someone takes without right] except that it will be taken from his good deeds and given to his brother, and if he had no good

⁴³ Also included in this ruling is postpartum bleeding.

deeds, bad deeds will be taken from his brother and thrown upon him.” [al-Bukhari]

It is disliked that one travels alone, except in cases of necessity in which he cannot find anyone to accompany him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to a person who arrived from a journey:

“Who accompanied you?” He replied, **“No one accompanied me.”** Upon that, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: **“A lone traveler is a devil, two are two devils, and three is a traveling group.” [al-Haakim]**

One should choose good company and there should be one person as leader among them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If three people set out on a journey, one of them should be made a leader.” [Abu Dawood]

Before returning from a journey, one should inform his spouse of his expected arrival. The Prophet (ﷺ) would say this, and he would enter upon them at night. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If one of you is absent for a long while, let him not enter upon his spouse (upon his return) at night.”

[al-Bukhari & Muslim]

One should bid his friends and family farewell. One should not delay returning to his family after he has finished his business. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Travel is a portion of punishment such that a person would be prevented from eating, drinking, and sleeping. If one of you finishes his business, let him hurry to his family.” [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

• The Manners of Dealing with Public Property

There are certain manners which should be observed when one deals with public property. The Prophet (ﷺ) stated the way one should act when traversing roads or walkways. He said:

“Be careful and stay away from sitting on the paths.’ They said, ‘O Messenger of God, we have no other place to gather and talk.’ So he replied, ‘If you must do so, then give the path its right.’ They said, ‘And what is the right of the path?’ He (ﷺ) replied, ‘Lowering one’s gaze (not looking at members of the opposite sex), not bringing harm to others, replying to salutations, and enjoining good and forbidding evil.’ ”

[al-Bukhari & Muslim]

In another narration he said:

“...that you help those in need and guide the lost.”

[Abu Dawood]

One should take care of the roads and not vandalize public property. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Fear the two things for which people curse others.” [His Companions] asked, “What are the two things for which people will curse others, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “That he relieves himself in places where people walk or seek shade.” *[Muslim]*

One should not carry with him things which may be harmful to others. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“When one of you passes through our Masjid or marketplace and he has an arrow, let him hold its (metal) head (or he said: let him grasp it with his hand) so that no Muslims would be harmed by it.”

[al-Bukhari & Muslim]

• **Manners of Trade**

In general, trade is lawful and permissible in Islam, for it is an exchange of products between the buyer and seller. But when harm may be incurred to either of the two parties, the trade is deemed unlawful and prohibited. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves unjustly.» [4:29]

Islam has deemed the profits made from trade of the purest and best means of earning a living. The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about which earning was best and most pure, and he replied:

“Work done by a person using his own hands [i.e. manual labor] and every truthful and sincere trade.”

[Ahmad]

Islam has enjoined that the individual be truthful while conducting business. The Prophet (ﷺ) said

“A Muslim merchant who is truthful and trustworthy will be with the martyrs on the Day of Requital.”

[al-Haakim]

One should explain any faults which may not be apparent in the product. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It is impermissible for anyone to sell anything except if he clarifies any fault that may be found in it, and anyone who knows of it should (also) clarify it.”

[Ahmad]

One should not cheat. *Abu Hurairah* narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a pile of food. He put his hands inside it and felt water on his fingers. He said:

“What is this, o seller of (this) food?” He said: ‘It was left out in the rain, O Messenger of Allah!’ He said, “Could you not have put it on top of the food so that people could see it? Whoever deceives (people) is not from us.” *[Muslim]*

A person should be truthful in his dealings and not lie. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The two parties (involved in the trade) have an option (to cancel the trade) as long as they have not parted. If

they have both told the truth and clarified all aspects, their trade will be blessed for them. But if they conceal (faults and other aspects) and lie, the blessings of the trade will be wiped out.” [*al-Bukhari and Muslim*]

One should be easygoing while buying and selling, for it is a means to form and strengthen relations between the buyer and seller and does away with the causes of materialism which destroy human and brotherly relationships. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“May Allah have mercy on a person who is easygoing when he buys, sells, or asks the repayment of a loan.” [*al-Bukhari*]

One should not swear oaths when he trades. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Be careful and stay away from swearing many oaths when trading, for [if he does so falsely] the buyer will buy, but then its blessing will be wiped out.” [*Muslim*]

It encourages that one take back the sale if a person is regretful of the purchase. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever takes back the sale of his brother, Allah will take back [the punishment] of his slips on the Day of Resurrection.” [*Abu Dawood & ibn Maajah*]

These are some of the manners and etiquettes which Islam has prescribed. There are many others, but due to brevity, we cannot mention them here. It is sufficient to know that there is no matter in life, except that there is a Qur'anic verse, or Prophetic tradition which addresses it. The reason for this is that a Muslim's entire life would become an act of worship, and a means to increase his good deeds.

Conclusion

We will conclude this book with the statements of two people who embraced Islam. *F. Filweas*⁴⁴ asserts:

“The West is suffering from a great spiritual void which no principle or faith could fill and bring about happiness. Despite the affluence, the so-called economic prosperity, and the satisfaction of the physical needs of people, the Western man still has a sense of worthlessness of his life. He wonders: Why am I alive? Where am I heading? Why? No one as of yet has given him a satisfactory response. Unfortunately, he has no idea that this remedy is found in the right religion about which he knows nothing more than doubts and misconceptions. However, the rays of light have started to shine and dawn has started to appear after groups of Westerners, even if they be a few, have started to embrace Islam and the Western man began to see with his own eyes, both men and women implementing Islam and living up to its teachings. Everyday some people embrace the true Religion, and it is just the beginning...”

*Deborah Potter*⁴⁵ asserts:

“Islam, which is the Law of God, is evident in nature around us. Mountains, oceans, planets and star move in orbit by Allah’s command. They are in a state of

⁴⁴ A British Naval officer who participated in World War One and World Two. He was raised in a Christian environment and its culture was deeply engrained in him. In spite of this fact, he embraced Islam after coming across the Noble Qur'an and various Islamic literature in the Year 1924 CE. Taken from the book "What they say about Islam", by Imad-ud-Deen Khaleel.

⁴⁵ Born in 1954 CE in Traverse Michigan, she graduated from the University of Michigan in the field of Journalism. Taken from the book "What they say about Islam", by Imad-ud-Deen Khaleel.

submission to the command of Allah, their Creator, as are characters in a story, and to Allah is the best example. They do not speak nor act except with what the author decides for them. Like this, every atom in this universe, even of inanimate objects, is also in a state of submission. However, humans are an exception to this rule, for Allah has granted him the freedom to choose. He has the option to submit to the command of Allah, or to lay down his own laws and Religion he pleases. Unfortunately, he has chosen the second option most of the time. People in Europe and America are embracing Islam in large numbers because they are thirsty for peace of mind and spiritual security. Rather, even a number of Christian Orientalists and preachers, who originally commenced their work in order to destroy Islam and bring out its alleged shortcomings, have themselves become Muslims. This is because the evidence of the truth is decisive; there is no way to refute it.”

**All Praise is due to Allah alone, the Lord of the Worlds
And may Allah exalt the mention of His Prophet and render
him safe from every derogatory thing**